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analysis







# THE CHIEF AMERICAN POETS







William Cullen Bryant

Thoreau

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Edgar Allan Poe

Henry W. Longfellow

Sidney Lanier

Walt Whitman

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Charles Whittier

## BY

NOTES, REFERENCES, AND  
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

BY

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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1911  
in England  
from 1911

Walt Whitman  
in the British Museum  
(in the collection)

**THE**  
**CHIEF AMERICAN POETS**  
***Selected Poems***

BY

**BRYANT, POE, EMERSON, LONGFELLOW  
WHITTIER, HOLMES, LOWELL  
WHITMAN AND LANIER**

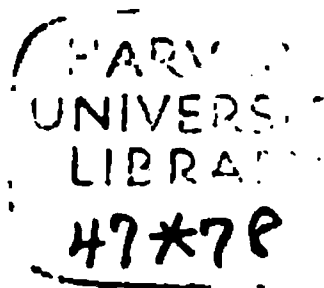
**EDITED, WITH NOTES, REFERENCE LISTS  
AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES**

BY

**CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE, PH. D.  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

**BOSTON, NEW YORK, AND CHICAGO  
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1905**

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Publishers of "THE CHIEF AMERICAN POETS."

October, 1905.

MESSRS. D. APPLETON & Co., New York. — The Poetical Works of William Cullen Bryant.

MESSRS. HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & Co., Boston. — The Poetical Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier.

MESSRS. CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, New York. — Poems of Sidney Lanier.

MESSRS. SMALL, MAYNARD & Co., Boston. — Leaves of Grass, by Walt Whitman.





## PREFACE

THIS volume is in no sense an anthology. Mr. Stedman has collected, with complete knowledge of the field, and with all but unerring taste and judgment, the choicest 'flowers' of our American verse from more than six hundred poets. His *American Anthology* must remain for many years without a rival.

'Yet still the man is greater than his song.' Many true lovers of literature care more for a few poets than for many poems, and would prefer to have always by them the best work of our few chief poets, rather than the few best poems of our many minor singers. The present volume, like my *British Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, attempts to give, for each one of the authors included, all the material needed to show his development and his achievement, and to give a first knowledge of him as man and poet.

The selection has been made full and comprehensive. No poem has been omitted merely on account of its length, and every poem, even the longest, is given in full, with two exceptions only: Whitman's 'Song of Myself,' and Lowell's 'Fable for Critics.' The poems of each author are arranged in chronological order, and dated. Wherever possible, both the date of writing and that of first publication have been given.

The brief 'Biographical Sketches' at the end of the volume are designed only to give an easily accessible summary of the author's life, especially as related to his poetical work. They make no pretence of absolute completeness, or of presenting new facts based on original investigation; nor do they attempt any critical estimate of the poet's work, except in a paragraph or two of brief summary at the end of each.

In the reference lists, however, I have tried to furnish full material for a complete and thorough study of each author. Under the heading *Editions* in each list are named (1) the standard library editions of the author's complete works; (2) the best library editions of his poetical works alone; (3) the best one-volume editions of his poems; and (4) in some cases, the best books of selections from his work. Under the heading *Biography and Reminiscences* are named in the first paragraph the most important biographies of the poet, and in the second paragraph other books or essays dealing chiefly with his life and personality. There follow sections devoted to *Criticism* and to *Tributes in Verse*. In this mass of material, I have indicated throughout the books, essays, or editions which seemed to me of most importance, and have added a brief word of comment where it seemed desirable. I have not tried to give in these reference lists a complete bibliography of all that has been written on each author, and have omitted many titles which seemed to be of little or no importance. But I have wished to name everything that could be of value, and preferred to err on the side of inclusion rather than of omission. It is probable, however, that some essential references may have been overlooked, and it is hardly possible that in giving so many titles and dates, all errors should have been avoided. I shall be grateful for any corrections or important additions.

In the notes, I have planned to give only essential facts about the origin or circumstances of composition of each poem, and to show its connection with the author's life, or with his other works. Critical comment has been excluded, except, in a few cases, that of the author himself or of contemporary poets. In the case of two poets, Emerson and Whitman, it has seemed worth while to give from their prose a good many passages which illustrate the ideas of the poems, while the poems illuminate the ideas of the prose.

The dates in italic figures, at the left, give the date of writing; those in Roman, at the right, the date of publication. To make these dates as accurate as possible has involved, in most cases, not only a thorough study of the biographies of the poets, but also a great deal of research among the files of periodicals to which they may have contributed. In a few cases, where I have felt that a poem had perhaps been published in a periodical before the year of its appearance in a volume, but have not been able to trace it, I have indicated this by placing in parentheses the date of first publication in book form.

In making the selections I have tried to follow not so much my individual taste as the consensus of opinion, now pretty well formed, as to which poems of our elder authors are the best and most representative. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the ready generosity with which so many critics and teachers have given me the help of their advice and have put their special knowledge at my service. I have to thank, in the first place, Professor Charles F. Richardson of Dartmouth, and Professors W. P. Trent and Brander Matthews of Columbia, — three of the chief historians of American literature; and next Professor George R. Carpenter of Columbia, who has written the best biographies we have of more than one of our chief poets. The present volume was first thought of as a companion to Professor Carpenter's *American Prose*; and while I have departed considerably from the plan and method of that book, I have had throughout Professor Carpenter's generous approval and coöperation. I am also under special obligation to Mr. W. R. Thayer, to whose sure taste and thorough knowledge of our poets I have often appealed; to Mr. Ferris Greenslet, who has helped me with the selections and the reference-list for Lowell; and to Mr. Laurens Maynard, who has put at my service his remarkable collection of Whitman books, and given freely of his time and knowledge in helping me to trace each poem of Whitman to its earliest publication, and to compare its text with that of the original edition.

I gladly take this opportunity to thank also Professor Charles W. Kent, of the University of Virginia, whose edition of Poe's poems in the Virginia Edition of the *Complete Works* is invaluable, and who has also generously given his personal help; Professor Edwin Mims, of Trinity College; Professors W. L. Phelps, F. C. Prescott, A. H. Quinn, Henry N. Snyder, Charles L. Young, W. C. Thayer, G. Herbert Clarke, Richard Jones, J. H. Chamberlin, William B. Cairns, A. B. Milford, Frank C. Lockwood, Arthur P. Hall, Enoch Perrine, Vernon P. Squires, and Benjamin Sledd; Mr. Clyde Furst, of Columbia; Miss Jeannette Marks, of Mount Holyoke; Miss Lucy Tappan, the author of an excellent manual, *Topical Notes on American Authors*; and others who have kindly made suggestions or gone over my lists of selections. I wish also to thank the authorities of the Columbia, Harvard, and Cornell libraries, especially Mr. T. J. Kiernan, who have shown me many courtesies; and others without whose help the volume could not have been begun or completed.

For the use of copyrighted material, I am under obligation to Dr. Edward W. Emerson; Messrs. D. Appleton & Co.; Messrs. Harper & Bros.; Mrs. Sidney Lanier, and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons; Mr. Horace Traubel and Mr. Thomas B. Harned, the literary executors of Whitman, and Messrs. Small, Maynard & Co., his authorized publishers; and of course, most of all, to Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., without whose coöperation no book of selections from the chief American poets could be undertaken.

CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK CITY..

October 1, 1905.

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# THE CHIEF AMERICAN POETS



# WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

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## THANATOPSIS<sup>1</sup>

To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she  
speaks

A various language; for his gayer hours  
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile  
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides  
Into his darker musings, with a mild  
And healing sympathy, that steals away  
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When  
thoughts

Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
Over thy spirit, and sad images

Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
And breathless darkness, and the narrow  
house,

Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at  
heart; —

Go forth, under the open sky, and list

<sup>1</sup> This, the first great poem written in America, was published in the *North American Review* for September, 1817, vol. v, pp. 338-340. Bryant's father had found it, together with the 'Fragment,' later known as 'Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood,' among other papers in a desk; and had immediately taken it to Boston and shown it to his friend Willard Phillips, one of the editors of the *North American Review*. When Phillips read the poem to his fellow editors, one of them, Richard H. Dana, exclaimed, 'Ah, Phillips, you have been imposed upon; no one on this side of the Atlantic is capable of writing such verses;' and though soon persuaded that the verses really were by an American, the editors still believed that 'Thanatopsis' must have been written by the young poet's father. Phillips says in a letter to Bryant, December, 1817: 'Your "Fragment" was exceedingly liked here. . . . All the best judges say that it and your father's "Thanatopsis" are the very best poetry that has been published in this country.'

As originally printed in the *North American Review*, the poem began with what is now line 17,

— Yet a few days,

and ended with lines 65 and 66,

shall come,

And make their bed with thee.

It was preceded by four stanzas of four lines each, which did not properly belong to the poem, but had been found with it. The beginning and ending of the poem as it now stands were first given in the volume of poems published by Bryant in 1821.

See Mr. Godwin's account of the origin of the poem, in his *Life of Bryant*, vol. i, pp. 97-101; and of its first publication, pp. 148-155.

To Nature's teachings, while from all  
around —

Earth and her waters, and the depths of  
air —

Comes a still voice — Yet a few days, and  
thee

The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
In all his course; nor yet in the cold  
ground,

Where thy pale form was laid, with many  
tears,

Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist  
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee,  
shall claim

Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,  
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up  
Thine individual being, shalt thou go

To mix forever with the elements,  
To be a brother to the insensible rock

And to the sluggish clod, which the rude  
swain

Turns with his share, and treads upon. The  
oak

Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy  
mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place  
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou  
wish

Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie  
down

With patriarchs of the infant world — with  
kings,

The powerful of the earth — the wise, the  
good,

Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills  
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun, — the  
vales

Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
The venerable woods — rivers that move

In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green; and, poured

round all,  
Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste, —

Are but the solemn decorations all  
 Of the great tomb of man. The golden  
     sun,  
 The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,  
 Are shining on the sad abodes of death,  
 Through the still lapse of ages. All that  
     tread  
 The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
 That slumber in its bosom. — Take the  
     wings <sup>50</sup>  
 Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,  
 Or lose thyself in the continuous woods  
 Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no  
     sound,  
 Save his own dashings — yet the dead are  
     there:  
 And millions in those solitudes, since first  
 The flight of years began, have laid them  
     down  
 In their last sleep — the dead reign there  
     alone.  
 So shalt thou rest, and what if thou with-  
     draw  
 In silence from the living, and no friend  
 Take note of thy departure? All that  
     breathe <sup>60</sup>  
 Will share thy destiny. The gay will  
     laugh  
 When thou art gone, the solemn brood of  
     care  
 Plod on, and each one as before will chase  
 His favorite phantom; yet all these shall  
     leave  
 Their mirth and their employments, and  
     shall come  
 And make their bed with thee. As the long  
     train  
 Of ages glide away, the sons of men,  
 The youth in life's green spring, and he who  
     goes  
 In the full strength of years, matron and  
     maid,  
 The speechless babe, and the gray-headed  
     man — <sup>70</sup>  
 Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,  
 By those, who in their turn shall follow  
     them.

So live, that when thy summons comes  
     to join  
 The innumerable caravan, which moves  
 To that mysterious realm, where each shall  
     take  
 His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
 Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,

Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and  
     soothed  
 By an unfaltering trust, approach thy  
     grave,  
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his  
     couch <sup>80</sup>  
 About him, and lies down to pleasant  
     dreams.  
 1811? 1817.<sup>1</sup>

### THE YELLOW VIOLET

WHEN beechen buds begin to swell,  
 And woods the blue-bird's warble know,  
 The yellow violet's modest bell  
     Peeps from the last year's leaves be-  
     low.

Ere russet fields their green resume,  
 Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,  
 To meet thee, when thy faint perfume  
     Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring  
 First plant thee in the watery mould, <sup>10</sup>  
 And I have seen thee blossoming  
     Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view  
 Pale skies, and chilling moisture sip,  
 Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,  
     And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,  
 And earthward bent thy gentle eye,  
 Unapt the passing view to meet,  
     When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh. <sup>20</sup>

Oft, in the sunless April day,  
 Thy early smile has stayed my walk;  
 But midst the gorgeous blooms of May,  
     I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

<sup>1</sup> Figures at the left, in italics, give the date of writing; those at the right, in roman, the date of publication. For Bryant's poems the dates are taken from Godwin's standard edition of the Poetical Works.

Mr. Godwin states in his note to 'Thanatopsis' that the poem was written in the summer of 1811, which would make Bryant only sixteen years old at the time, not seventeen, as Mr. Godwin himself elsewhere says. Bryant's own account of the matter is given in a letter of 1855, which Mr. Godwin quotes: 'I cannot give you any information of the occasion which suggested to my mind the idea of my poem "Thanatopsis." It was written when I was seventeen or eighteen years old — I have not now at hand the memorandums [*sic*] which would enable me to be precise — and I believe it was composed in my solitary rambles in the woods.'

So they, who climb to wealth, forget  
The friends in darker fortunes tried.  
I copied them — but I regret  
That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour  
Awakes the painted tribes of light, 30  
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower  
That made the woods of April bright.  
1814. 1821.

### INSCRIPTION FOR THE EN- TRANCE TO A WOOD

STRANGER, if thou hast learned a truth  
which needs  
No school of long experience, that the world  
Is full of guilt and misery, and hast seen  
Enough of all its sorrows, crimes, and cares,  
To tire thee of it, enter this wild wood  
And view the haunts of Nature. The calm  
shade  
Shall bring a kindred calm, and the sweet  
breeze  
That makes the green leaves dance, shall  
waft a balm  
To thy sick heart. Thou wilt find nothing  
here  
Of all that pained thee in the haunts of  
men, 10  
And made thee loathe thy life. The primal  
curse  
Fell, it is true, upon the unsinching earth,  
But not in vengeance. God hath yoked to  
guilt  
Her pale tormentor, misery. Hence, these  
shades  
Are still the abodes of gladness; the thick  
roof  
Of green and stirring branches is alive  
And musical with birds, that sing and sport  
In wantonness of spirit; while below  
The squirrel, with raised paws and form  
erect,  
Chirps merrily. Throngs of insects in the  
shade 20  
Try their thin wings and dance in the warm  
beam  
That waked them into life. Even the green  
trees  
Partake the deep contentment; as they bend  
To the soft winds, the sun from the blue  
sky  
Looks in and sheds a blessing on the scene.

Scarce less the cleft-born wild-flower seems  
to enjoy  
Existence, than the wingèd plunderer  
That sucks its sweets. The mossy rocks  
themselves,  
And the old and ponderous trunks of pros-  
trate trees  
That lead from knoll to knoll a causey  
rude 30  
Or bridge the sunken brook, and their dark  
roots,  
With all their earth upon them, twisting  
high,  
Breathe fixed tranquillity. The rivulet  
Sends forth glad sounds, and tripping o'er  
its bed  
Of pebbly sands, or leaping down the rocks,  
Seems, with continuous laughter, to rejoice  
In its own being. Softly tread the marge,  
Lest from her midway perch thou scare the  
wren  
That dips her bill in water.<sup>1</sup> The cool wind,  
That stirs the stream in play, shall come to  
thee, 40  
Like one that loves thee nor will let thee  
pass  
Ungreeted, and shall give its light embrace.  
1816. 1817.

### TO A WATERFOWL<sup>2</sup>

WHITHER, midst falling dew,  
While glow the heavens with the last steps  
of day,  
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou  
pursue  
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye  
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee  
wrong,  
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,  
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide, 10

<sup>1</sup> The poem, as first published in the *North American Review* for September, 1817, under the title 'A Fragment,' ended at this point. The last lines were added in the first edition of the *Poems*, in 1821.

<sup>2</sup> On the origin of this poem, see Godwin's *Life of Bryant*, vol. i, pp. 143, 144. Hartley Coleridge once called it 'the best short poem in the English language;' and Matthew Arnold was inclined to agree with his judgment. See an account of the incident in Bigelow's *Life of Bryant*, note to pp. 42, 43.

Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
On the chafed ocean-side ?

There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast —  
The desert and illimitable air —  
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,  
At that far height, the cold, thin atmos-  
phere,  
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
Though the dark night is near. 20

And soon that toil shall end;  
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and  
rest,  
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall  
bend,  
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou 'rt gone, the abyss of heaven  
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my  
heart  
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy cer-  
tain flight, 30  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.

1815.

1818.

### GREEN RIVER <sup>1</sup>

WHEN breezes are soft and skies are fair,  
I steal an hour from study and care,  
And hie me away to the woodland scene,  
Where wanders the stream with waters of  
green,  
As if the bright fringe of herbs on its  
brink  
Had given their stain to the waves they  
drink;  
And they, whose meadows it murmurs  
through,  
Have named the stream from its own fair  
hue.

Yet pure its waters — its shallows are  
bright 9  
With colored pebbles and sparkles of light,

<sup>1</sup> This was Bryant's favorite among his early poems.

And clear the depths where its eddies play,  
And dimples deepen and whirl away,  
And the plane-tree's speckled arms o'er-  
shoot

The swifter current that mines its root,  
Through whose shifting leaves, as you walk  
the hill,

The quivering glimmer of sun and rill  
With a sudden flash on the eye is thrown,  
Like the ray that streams from the dia-  
mond-stone.

Oh, loveliest there the spring days come,  
With blossoms, and birds, and wild-bees' 20  
hum;

The flowers of summer are fairest there,  
And freshest the breath of the summer  
air;

And sweetest the golden autumn day  
In silence and sunshine glides away.

Yet, fair as thou art, thou shunnest to  
glide,

Beautiful stream ! by the village side;  
But windest away from haunts of men,  
To quiet valley and shaded glen;  
And forest, and meadow, and slope of hill,  
Around thee, are lonely, lovely, and still, 30  
Lonely — save when, by thy rippling tides,  
From thicket to thicket the angler glides;  
Or the simpler comes, with basket and  
book,

For herbs of power on thy banks to look;  
Or haply, some idle dreamer, like me,  
To wander, and muse, and gaze on thee,  
Still — save the chirp of birds that feed  
On the river cherry and seedy reed,  
And thy own wild music gushing out  
With mellow murmur of fairy shout, 40  
From dawn to the blush of another day,  
Like traveller singing along his way.

That fairy music I never hear,  
Nor gaze on those waters so green and  
clear,

And mark them winding away from sight,  
Darkened with shade or flashing with light,  
While o'er them the vine to its thicket  
clings,

And the zephyr stoops to freshen his wings,  
But I wish that fate had left me free  
To wander these quiet haunts with thee, 50  
Till the eating cares of earth should de-  
part,

And the peace of the scene pass into my  
heart;

And I envy thy stream, as it glides along  
Through its beautiful banks in a trance of  
song.

Though forced to drudge for the dregs  
of men,  
And scrawl strange words with the bar-  
barous pen,  
And mingle among the jostling crowd,  
Where the sons of strife are subtle and  
loud —  
I often come to this quiet place,  
To breathe the airs that ruffle thy face, 60  
And gaze upon thee in silent dream,  
For in thy lonely and lovely stream  
An image of that calm life appears  
That won my heart in my greener years.  
1819. 1820.

### A WINTER PIECE

THE time has been that these wild soli-  
tudes,  
Yet beautiful as wild, were trod by me  
Oftener than now; and when the ills of life  
Had chafed my spirit — when the unsteady  
pulse  
Beat with strange flutterings — I would  
wander forth  
And seek the woods. The sunshine on my  
path  
Was to me as a friend. The swelling hills,  
The quiet dells retiring far between,  
With gentle invitation to explore  
Their windings, were a calm society 10  
That talked with me and soothed me. Then  
the chant  
Of birds, and chime of brooks, and soft  
caress  
Of the fresh sylvan air, made me forget  
The thoughts that broke my peace, and I  
began  
To gather simples by the fountain's brink,  
And lose myself in day-dreams. While I  
stood  
In Nature's loneliness, I was with one  
With whom I early grew familiar, one  
Who never had a frown for me, whose  
voice  
Never rebuked me for the hours I stole 20  
From cares I loved not, but of which the  
world  
Deems highest, to converse with her. When  
shrieked

The bleak November winds, and smote the  
woods,  
And the brown fields were herbless, and  
the shades,  
That met above the merry rivulet,  
Were spoiled, I sought, I loved them still;  
they seemed  
Like old companions in adversity.  
Still there was beauty in my walks; the  
brook,  
Bordered with sparkling frost-work, was  
as gay  
As with its fringe of summer flowers.  
Afar, 30  
The village with its spires, the path of  
streams  
And dim receding valleys, hid before  
By interposing trees, lay visible  
Through the bare grove, and my familiar  
haunts  
Seemed new to me. Nor was I slow to  
come  
Among them, when the clouds, from their  
still skirts,  
Had shaken down on earth the feathery  
snow,  
And all was white. The pure keen air  
abroad,  
Albeit it breathed no scent of herb, nor  
heard  
Love-call of bird nor merry hum of bee, 40  
Was not the air of death. Bright mosses  
crept  
Over the spotted trunks, and the close buds,  
That lay along the boughs, instinct with  
life,  
Patient, and waiting the soft breath of  
Spring,  
Feared not the piercing spirit of the North.  
The snow-bird twittered on the beechen  
bough,  
And 'neath the hemlock, whose thick  
branches bent  
Beneath its bright cold burden, and kept  
dry  
A circle, on the earth, of withered leaves,  
The partridge found a shelter. Through  
the snow 50  
The rabbit sprang away. The lighter track  
Of fox, and the raccoon's broad path, were  
there,  
Crossing each other. From his hollow  
tree  
The squirrel was abroad, gathering the  
nuts



Just fallen, that asked the winter cold and  
     sway  
 Of winter blast, to shake them from their  
     hold.

But Winter has yet brighter scenes — he  
     boasts  
 Splendors beyond what gorgeous Summer  
     knows;  
 Or Autumn with his many fruits, and woods  
 All flushed with many hues. Come when  
     the rains

Have glazed the snow and clothed the trees  
     with ice,

While the slant sun of February pours  
 Into the bowers a flood of light. Approach!  
 The incrustated surface shall upbear thy steps,  
 And the broad arching portals of the grove  
 Welcome thy entering. Look! the massy  
     trunks

Are cased in the pure crystal; each light  
     spray,  
 Nodding and tinkling in the breath of  
     heaven,

Is studded with its trembling water-drops,  
 That glimmer with an amethystine light.  
 But round the parent-stem the long low  
     boughs

Bend, in a glittering ring, and arbors hide  
 The glassy floor. Oh! you might deem  
     the spot

The spacious cavern of some virgin mine,  
 Deep in the womb of earth — where the  
     gems grow,  
 And diamonds put forth radiant rods and  
     bud

With amethyst and topaz — and the place  
 Lit up, most royally, with the pure beam  
 That dwells in them. Or haply the vast hall  
 Of fairy palace, that outlasts the night, 80  
 And fades not in the glory of the sun; —  
 Where crystal columns send forth slender  
     shafts

And crossing arches; and fantastic aisles  
 Wind from the sight in brightness, and are  
     lost

Among the crowded pillars. Raise thine  
     eye;

Thou seest no cavern roof, no palace vault;  
 There the blue sky and the white drifting  
     cloud

Look in. Again the wildered fancy dreams  
 Of spouting fountains, frozen as they rose,  
 And fixed, with all their branching jets, in  
     air,

90

And all their sluices sealed. All, all is light;  
 Light without shade. But all shall pass  
     away

With the next sun. From numberless vast  
     trunks

Loosened, the crashing ice shall make a  
     sound

Like the far roar of rivers, and the eve  
 Shall close o'er the brown woods as it was  
     wont.

And it is pleasant, when the noisy streams  
 Are just set free, and milder suns melt off  
 The plashy snow, save only the firm drift  
 In the deep glen or the close shade of  
     pines —

'Tis pleasant to behold the wreaths of  
     smoke

Roll up among the maples of the hill,  
 Where the shrill sound of youthful voices  
     wakes

The shriller echo, as the clear pure lymph,  
 That from the wounded trees, in twinkling  
     drops,

Falls, mid the golden brightness of the morn,  
 Is gathered in with brimming pails, and  
     oft,

Wielded by sturdy hands, the stroke of  
     axe

Makes the woods ring. Along the quiet  
     air,

Come and float calmly off the soft light  
     clouds,

Such as you see in summer, and the winds  
 Scarce stir the branches. Lodged in sunny  
     cleft,

Where the cold breezes come not, blooms  
     alone

The little wind-flower, whose just opened  
     eye

Is blue as the spring heaven it gazes at —  
 Startling the loiterer in the naked groves  
 With unexpected beauty, for the time  
 Of blossoms and green leaves is yet afar.

And ere it comes, the encountering winds  
     shall oft

Muster their wrath again, and rapid clouds  
 Shade heaven, and bounding on the frozen  
     earth

Shall fall their volleyed stores, rounded like  
     hail

And white like snow, and the loud North  
     again

Shall buffet the vexed forest in his rage.

1820.

1821.

## HYMN TO DEATH

OH ! could I hope the wise and pure in  
 heart  
 Might hear my song without a frown, nor  
 deem  
 My voice unworthy of the theme it tries, —  
 I would take up the hymn to Death, and  
 say  
 To the grim power, The world hath slan-  
 dered thee  
 And mocked thee. On thy dim and shad-  
 omy brow  
 They place an iron crown, and call thee king  
 Of terrors, and the spoiler of the world,  
 Deadly assassin, that strik'st down the fair,  
 The loved, the good — that breathest on the  
 lights 10  
 Of virtue set along the vale of life,  
 And they go out in darkness. I am come,  
 Not with reproaches, not with cries and  
 prayers,  
 Such as have stormed thy stern, insensible  
 ear  
 From the beginning; I am come to speak  
 Thy praises. True it is, that I have wept  
 Thy conquests, and may weep them yet  
 again,  
 And thou from some I love wilt take a life  
 Dear to me as my own. Yet while the spell  
 Is on my spirit, and I talk with thee 20  
 In sight of all thy trophies, face to face,  
 Meet is it that my voice should utter forth  
 Thy nobler triumphs; I will teach the world  
 To thank thee. Who are thine accusers?  
 — Who?  
 The living! — they who never felt thy  
 power,  
 And know thee not. The curses of the  
 wretch  
 Whose crimes are ripe, his sufferings when  
 thy hand  
 Is on him, and the hour he dreads is come,  
 Are writ among thy praises. But the good —  
 Does he whom thy kind hand dismissed to  
 peace, 30  
 Upbraid the gentle violence that took off  
 His fetters, and unbarred his prison-cell?  
  
 Raise then the hymn to Death. Deliv-  
 erer!  
 God hath anointed thee to free the op-  
 pressed  
 And crush the oppressor. When the armed  
 chief,

The conqueror of nations, walks the world,  
 And it is changed beneath his feet, and all  
 Its kingdoms melt into one mighty realm —  
 Thou, while his head is loftiest and his heart  
 Blasphemes, imagining his own right hand 40  
 Almighty, thou dost set thy sudden grasp  
 Upon him, and the links of that strong chain  
 Which bound mankind are crumbled; thou  
 dost break  
 Sceptre and crown, and beat his throne to  
 dust.  
 Then the earth shouts with gladness, and  
 her tribes  
 Gather within their ancient bounds again.  
 Else had the mighty of the olden time,  
 Nimrod, Sesostris, or the youth who feigned  
 His birth from Libyan Ammon, smitten yet  
 The nations with a rod of iron, and driven  
 Their chariot o'er our necks. Thou dost  
 avenge, 51  
 In thy good time, the wrongs of those who  
 know  
 No other friend. Nor dost thou interpose  
 Only to lay the sufferer asleep,  
 Where he who made him wretched troubles  
 not  
 His rest — thou dost strike down his tyrant  
 too.  
 Oh, there is joy when hands that held the  
 scourge  
 Drop lifeless, and the pitiless heart is cold.  
 Thou too dost purge from earth its horrible  
 And old idolatries; — from the proud fanes  
 Each to his grave their priests go out, till  
 none 61  
 Is left to teach their worship; then the fires  
 Of sacrifice are chilled, and the green moss  
 O'ercreeps their altars; the fallen images  
 Cumber the weedy courts, and for loud  
 hymns,  
 Chanted by kneeling multitudes, the wind  
 Shrieks in the solitary aisles. When he  
 Who gives his life to guilt, and laughs at all  
 The laws that God or man has made, and  
 round  
 Hedges his seat with power, and shines in  
 wealth, — 70  
 Lifts up his atheist front to scoff at Hea-  
 ven,  
 And celebrates his shame in open day,  
 Thou, in the pride of all his crimes, cutt'st  
 off  
 The horrible example. Touched by thine,  
 The extortioner's hard hand foregoes the  
 gold

Wrung from the o'er-worn poor. The per-  
 jurer,  
 Whose tongue was lithe, e'en now, and vol-  
 ule  
 Against his neighbor's life, and he who  
 laughed  
 And leaped for joy to see a spotless fame  
 Blasted before his own foul calumnies, 80  
 Are smit with deadly silence. He, who  
 sold  
 His conscience to preserve a worthless life,  
 Even while he hugs himself on his escape,  
 Trembles, as, doubly terrible, at length,  
 Thy steps o'ertake him, and there is no time  
 For parley, nor will bribes unclench thy  
 grasp.  
 Oft, too, dost thou reform thy victim, long  
 Ere his last hour. And when the reveller,  
 Mad in the chase of pleasure, stretches on,  
 And strains each nerve, and clears the path  
 of life 90  
 Like wind, thou point'st him to the dread-  
 ful goal,  
 And shak'st thy hour-glass in his reeling  
 eye,  
 And check'st him in mid course. Thy  
 skeleton hand  
 Shows to the faint of spirit the right path,  
 And he is warned, and fears to step aside.  
 Thou sett'st between the ruffian and his  
 crime  
 Thy ghastly countenance, and his slack  
 hand  
 Drops the drawn knife. But, oh, most  
 fearfully  
 Dost thou show forth Heaven's justice,  
 when thy shafts  
 Drink up the ebbing spirit — then the hard  
 Of heart and violent of hand restores 101  
 The treasure to the friendless wretch he  
 wronged.  
 Then from the writhing bosom thou dost  
 pluck  
 The guilty secret; lips, for ages sealed,  
 Are faithless to their dreadful trust at  
 length,  
 And give it up; the felon's latest breath  
 Absolves the innocent man who bears his  
 crime;  
 The slanderer, horror-smitten, and in tears,  
 Recalls the deadly obloquy he forged  
 To work his brother's ruin. Thou dost  
 make 110  
 Thy penitent victim utter to the air  
 The dark conspiracy that strikes at life,

And aims to whelm the laws; ere yet the  
 hour  
 Is come, and the dread sign of murder  
 given.

Thus, from the first of time, hast thou  
 been found  
 On virtue's side; the wicked, but for thee,  
 Had been too strong for the good; the great  
 of earth  
 Had crushed the weak for ever. Schooled  
 in guile  
 For ages, while each passing year had  
 brought 119  
 Its baneful lesson, they had filled the world  
 With their abominations; while its tribes,  
 Trodden to earth, imbruted, and despoiled,  
 Had knelt to them in worship; sacrifice  
 Had smoked on many an altar, temple-  
 roofs  
 Had echoed with the blasphemous prayer  
 and hymn:  
 But thou, the great reformer of the world,  
 Tak'st off the sons of violence and fraud  
 In their green pupilage, their lore half  
 learned —  
 Ere guilt had quite o'errun the simple  
 heart  
 God gave them at their birth, and blotted  
 out 130  
 His image. Thou dost mark them flushed  
 with hope,  
 As on the threshold of their vast designs  
 Doubtful and loose they stand, and strik'st  
 them down.<sup>1</sup>

Alas! I little thought that the stern  
 power,  
 Whose fearful praise I sang, would try me  
 thus  
 Before the strain was ended. It must  
 cease —  
 For he is in his grave who taught my youth  
 The art of verse, and in the bud of life  
 Offered me to the Muses. Oh, cut off 139  
 Untimely! when thy reason in its strength,  
 Ripened by years of toil and studious search,  
 And watch of Nature's silent lessons, taught  
 Thy hand to practise best the lenient art  
 To which thou gavest thy laborious days,  
 And, last, thy life. And, therefore, when  
 the earth

<sup>1</sup> The poem was at first left unfinished, at this point.  
 Its concluding lines were added after the death of  
 Bryant's father, in 1820, at the age of fifty-three.

Received thee, tears were in unyielding  
 eyes  
 And on hard cheeks, and they who deemed  
 thy skill  
 Delayed their death-hour, shuddered and  
 turned pale  
 When thou wert gone. This faltering  
 verse, which thou  
 Shalt not, as wont, o'erlook, is all I have  
 To offer at thy grave — this — and the  
 hope 151  
 To copy thy example, and to leave  
 A name of which the wretched shall not  
 think  
 As of an enemy's, whom they forgive  
 As all forgive the dead. Rest, therefore,  
 thou  
 Whose early guidance trained my infant  
 steps —  
 Rest, in the bosom of God, till the brief  
 sleep  
 Of death is over, and a happier life  
 Shall dawn to waken thine insensible dust.

Now thou art not — and yet the men  
 whose guilt 160  
 Has wearied Heaven for vengeance — he  
 who bears  
 False witness — he who takes the orphan's  
 bread,  
 And robs the widow — he who spreads  
 abroad  
 Polluted hands in mockery of prayer,  
 Are left to cumber earth. Shuddering I  
 look  
 On what is written, yet I blot not out  
 The desultory numbers; let them stand,  
 The record of an idle revery.

1820.

1825.

### 'O FAIREST OF THE RURAL MAIDS'<sup>1</sup>

O FAIREST of the rural maids!  
 Thy birth was in the forest shades;  
 Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,  
 Were all that met thine infant eye.

Thy sports, thy wanderings, when a child,  
 Were ever in the sylvan wild;  
 And all the beauty of the place  
 Is in thy heart and on thy face.

<sup>1</sup> 'O Fairest of the Rural Maids' will strike every  
 poet as the truest poem written by Bryant. (POM.)

The twilight of the trees and rocks  
 Is in the light shade of thy locks;  
 Thy step is as the wind, that weaves  
 Its playful way among the leaves.

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene  
 And silent waters heaven is seen;  
 Their lashes are the herbs that look  
 On their young figures in the brook.

The forest depths, by foot unpressed,  
 Are not more sinless than thy breast;  
 The holy peace, that fills the air  
 Of those calm solitudes, is there.

1820.

1832.

### MONUMENT MOUNTAIN<sup>2</sup>

THOU who wouldst see the lovely and the  
 wild  
 Mingled in harmony on Nature's face,  
 Ascend our rocky mountains. Let thy foot  
 Fail not with weariness, for on their tops  
 The beauty and the majesty of earth,  
 Spread wide beneath, shall make thee to  
 forget  
 The steep and toilsome way. There, as  
 thou stand'st,  
 The haunts of men below thee, and around  
 The mountain-summits, thy expanding  
 heart  
 Shall feel a kindred with that loftier world  
 To which thou art translated, and partake  
 The enlargement of thy vision. Thou shalt  
 look

<sup>2</sup> The mountain called by this name is a remarkable  
 precipice in Great Barrington, overlooking the rich and  
 picturesque valley of the Housatonic, in the western part  
 of Massachusetts. At the southern extremity is, or was  
 a few years since, a conical pile of small stones, erected,  
 according to the tradition of the surrounding country,  
 by the Indians, in memory of a woman of the Stock-  
 bridge tribe who killed herself by leaping from the edge  
 of the precipice. Until within a few years past, small  
 parties of that tribe used to arrive from their settle-  
 ment in the western part of the State of New York, on  
 visits to Stockbridge, the place of their nativity and  
 former residence. A young woman belonging to one  
 of these parties related, to a friend of the author, the  
 story on which the poem of 'Monument Mountain' is  
 founded. An Indian girl had formed an attachment  
 for her cousin, which, according to the customs of the  
 tribe, was unlawful. She was, in consequence, seized  
 with a deep melancholy, and resolved to destroy her-  
 self. In company with a female friend, she repaired  
 to the mountain, decked out for the occasion in all her  
 ornaments, and, after passing the day on the summit in  
 singing with her companion the traditional songs of  
 her nation, she threw herself headlong from the rock,  
 and was killed. (BRYANT.)

Upon the green and rolling forest-tops,  
 And down into the secrets of the glens,  
 And streams that with their bordering  
     thickets strive  
 To hide their windings. Thou shalt gaze,  
     at once,  
 Here on white villages, and tilth, and herds,  
 And swarming roads, and there on soli-  
     tudes  
 That only hear the torrent, and the wind,  
 And eagle's shriek. There is a precipice 20  
 That seems a fragment of some mighty  
     wall,  
 Built by the hand that fashioned the old  
     world,  
 To separate its nations, and thrown down  
 When the flood drowned them. To the  
     north, a path  
 Conducts you up the narrow battlement.  
 Steep is the western side, shaggy and  
     wild  
 With mossy trees, and pinnacles of flint,  
 And many a hanging crag. But, to the  
     east,  
 Sheer to the vale go down the bare old  
     cliffs —  
 Huge pillars, that in middle heaven up-  
     bear 30  
 Their weather-beaten capitals, here dark  
 With moss, the growth of centuries, and  
     there  
 Of chalky whiteness where the thunder-  
     bolt  
 Has splintered them. It is a fearful thing  
 To stand upon the beetling verge, and see  
 Where storm and lightning, from that huge  
     gray wall,  
 Have tumbled down vast blocks, and at  
     the base  
 Dashed them in fragments, and to lay thine  
     ear  
 Over the dizzy depth, and hear the sound  
 Of winds, that struggle with the woods be-  
     low, 40  
 Come up like ocean murmurs. But the  
     scene  
 Is lovely round; a beautiful river there  
 Wanders amid the fresh and fertile meads,  
 The paradise he made unto himself,  
 Mining the soil for ages. On each side  
 The fields swell upward to the hills; be-  
     yond,  
 Above the hills, in the blue distance, rise  
 The mountain-columns with which earth  
     props heaven.

There is a tale about these reverend  
     rocks,  
 A sad tradition of unhappy love, 50  
 And sorrows borne and ended, long ago,  
 When over these fair vales the savage  
     sought  
 His game in the thick woods. There was  
     a maid,  
 The fairest of the Indian maids, bright-  
     eyed,  
 With wealth of raven tresses, a light form,  
 And a gay heart. About her cabin-door  
 The wide old woods resounded with her  
     song  
 And fairy laughter all the summer day.  
 She loved her cousin; such a love was  
     deemed,  
 By the morality of those stern tribes, 60  
 Incestuous, and she struggled hard and  
     long  
 Against her love, and reasoned with her  
     heart,  
 As simple Indian maiden might. In vain.  
 Then her eye lost its lustre, and her step  
 Its lightness, and the gray-haired men that  
     passed  
 Her dwelling, wondered that they heard no  
     more  
 The accustomed song and laugh of her,  
     whose looks  
 Were like the cheerful smile of Spring,  
     they said,  
 Upon the Winter of their age. She went  
 To weep where no eye saw, and was not  
     found 70  
 Where all the merry girls were met to  
     dance,  
 And all the hunters of the tribe were out;  
 Nor when they gathered from the rustling  
     husk  
 The shining ear; nor when, by the river's  
     side,  
 They pulled the grape and startled the  
     wild shades  
 With sounds of mirth. The keen-eyed  
     Indian dames  
 Would whisper to each other, as they saw  
 Her wasting form, and say, *The girl will*  
     *die.*

One day into the bosom of a friend,  
 A playmate of her young and innocent  
     years, 80  
 She poured her griefs. 'Thou know'st, and  
     thou alone,'

She said, 'for I have told thee, all my love,  
 And guilt, and sorrow. I am sick of life.  
 All night I weep in darkness, and the morn  
 Glares on me, as upon a thing accursed,  
 That has no business on the earth. I hate  
 The pastimes and the pleasant toils that  
 once  
 I loved; the cheerful voices of my friends  
 Sound in my ear like mockings, and, at  
 night,  
 In dreams, my mother, from the land of  
 souls,  
 Calls me and chides me. All that look on  
 me  
 Do seem to know my shame; I cannot bear  
 Their eyes; I cannot from my heart root  
 out  
 The love that wrings it so, and I must die.'

It was a summer morning, and they  
 went  
 To this old precipice. About the cliffs  
 Lay garlands, ears of maize, and shaggy  
 skins  
 Of wolf and bear, the offerings of the tribe  
 Here made to the Great Spirit, for they  
 deemed,  
 Like worshippers of the elder time, that  
 God  
 Doth walk on the high places and affect  
 The earth-o'erlooking mountains. She had  
 on  
 The ornaments with which her father loved  
 To deck the beauty of his bright-eyed girl,  
 And bade her wear when stranger warriors  
 came  
 To be his guests. Here the friends sat  
 them down,  
 And sang, all day, old songs of love and  
 death,  
 And decked the poor wan victim's hair with  
 flowers,  
 And prayed that safe and swift might be  
 her way  
 To the calm world of sunshine, where no  
 grief  
 Makes the heart heavy and the eyelids red.  
 Beautiful lay the region of her tribe  
 Below her — waters resting in the embrace  
 Of the wide forest, and maize-planted  
 glades  
 Opening amid the leafy wilderness.  
 She gazed upon it long, and at the sight  
 Of her own village peeping through the  
 trees,

And her own dwelling, and the cabin roof  
 Of him she loved with an unlawful love,  
 And came to die for, a warm gush of tears  
 Ran from her eyes. But when the sun  
 grew low  
 And the hill shadows long, she threw herself  
 From the steep rock and perished. There  
 was scooped,  
 Upon the mountain's southern slope, a  
 grave;  
 And there they laid her, in the very garb  
 With which the maiden decked herself for  
 death,  
 With the same withering wild-flowers in  
 her hair,  
 And o'er the mould that covered her, the  
 tribe  
 Built up a simple monument, a cone  
 Of small loose stones. Thenceforward all  
 who passed,  
 Hunter, and dame, and virgin, laid a stone  
 In silence on the pile. It stands there yet.  
 And Indians from the distant West, who  
 come  
 To visit where their fathers' bones are laid,  
 Yet tell the sorrowful tale, and to this day  
 The mountain where the hapless maiden  
 died  
 Is called the Mountain of the Monument.  
 1824. 1824.

## AUTUMN WOODS

ERE, in the northern gale,  
 The summer tresses of the trees are gone,  
 The woods of Autumn, all around our vale,  
 Have put their glory on.

The mountains that infold,  
 In their wide sweep, the colored landscape  
 round,  
 Seem groups of giant kings, in purple and  
 gold,  
 That guard the enchanted ground.

I roam the woods that crown  
 The uplands, where the mingled splendors  
 glow,  
 Where the gay company of trees look down  
 On the green fields below.

My steps are not alone  
 In these bright walks; the sweet south-  
 west, at play,



Flies, rustling, where the painted leaves  
are strwn  
Along the winding way.

And far in heaven, the while,  
The sun, that sends that gale to wander  
here,  
Pours out on the fair earth his quiet  
smile —  
The sweetest of the year. 20

Where now the solemn shade,  
Verdure and gloom where many branches  
meet;  
So grateful, when the noon of summer  
made  
The valleys sick with heat?

Let in through all the trees  
Come the strange rays; the forest depths  
are bright;  
Their sunny colored foliage, in the breeze,  
Twinkles, like beams of light.

The rivulet, late unseen,  
Where bickering through the shrubs its  
waters run, 30  
Shines with the image of its golden  
screen,  
And glimmerings of the sun.

But 'neath yon crimson tree,  
Lover to listening maid might breathe his  
flame,  
Nor mark, within its roseate canopy,  
Her blush of maiden shame.

Oh, Autumn! why so soon  
Depart the hues that make thy forests  
glad,  
Thy gentle wind and thy fair sunny noon,  
And leave thee wild and sad! 40

Ah! 't were a lot too blest  
Forever in thy colored shades to stray;  
Amid the kisses of the soft southwest  
To roam and dream for aye;

And leave the vain low strife  
That makes men mad — the tug for wealth  
and power —  
The passions and the cares that wither  
life,  
And waste its little hour.

1824.

1824.

A FOREST HYMN<sup>1</sup>

THE groves were God's first temples.  
Ere man learned  
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,  
And spread the roof above them — ere he  
framed  
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back  
The sound of anthems; in the darkling  
wood,  
Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down,  
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks  
And supplication. For his simple heart  
Might not resist the sacred influences  
Which, from the stilly twilight of the  
place, 10  
And from the gray old trunks that high in  
heaven  
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the  
sound  
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once  
All their green tops, stole over him, and  
bowed  
His spirit with the thought of boundless  
power  
And inaccessible majesty. Ah, why  
Should we, in the world's riper years, neg-  
lect  
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore  
Only among the crowd, and under roofs  
That our frail hands have raised? Let me,  
at least, 20  
Here, in the shadow of this aged wood,  
Offer one hymn — thrice happy, if it find  
Acceptance in his ear.

Father, thy hand  
Hath reared these venerable columns, Thou  
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst  
look down  
Upon the naked earth, and, forthwith, rose  
All these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy  
sun,  
Budded, and shook their green leaves in  
thy breeze,  
And shot toward heaven. The century-  
living crow,  
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old  
and died 30  
Among their branches, till, at last, they  
stood,  
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and  
dark,  
Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold

<sup>1</sup> See Godwin's *Life of Bryant*, vol. i, p. 214.

Communion with his Maker. These dim  
vaults,  
These winding aisles, of human pomp or  
pride  
Report not. No fantastic carvings show  
The boast of our vain race to change the  
form  
Of thy fair works. But Thou art here —  
Thou fill'st

The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds  
That run along the summit of these trees  
In music; Thou art in the cooler breath 41  
That from the inmost darkness of the place  
Comes, scarcely felt; the barked trunks, the  
ground,  
The fresh moist ground, are all instinct with  
Thee.

Here is continual worship; — Nature, here,  
In the tranquillity that Thou dost love,  
Enjoys thy presence. Noiselessly, around,  
From perch to perch, the solitary bird  
Passes; and yon clear spring, that, midst its  
herbs,  
Wells softly forth and wandering steep the  
roots 50

Of half the mighty forest, tells no tale  
Of all the good it does. Thou hast not left  
Thyself without a witness, in the shades,  
Of thy perfections. Grandeur, strength, and  
grace  
Are here to speak of Thee. This mighty  
oak —

By whose immovable stem I stand and seem  
Almost annihilated — not a prince,  
In all that proud old world beyond the  
deep,

E'er wore his crown as loftily as he  
Wears the green coronal of leaves with  
which 60

Thy hand has graced him. Nestled at his  
root

Is beauty, such as blooms not in the glare  
Of the broad sun. That delicate forest  
flower,

With scented breath and look so like a  
smile,

Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mould,  
An emanation of the indwelling Life,  
A visible token of the upholding Love,  
That are the soul of this great universe.

My heart is awed within me when I  
think

Of the great miracle that still goes on, 70  
In silence, round me — the perpetual work

Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed  
Forever. Written on thy works I read  
The lesson of thy own eternity.  
Lo! all grow old and die — but see again,  
How on the faltering footsteps of decay  
Youth presses — ever gay and beautiful  
youth  
In all its beautiful forms. These lofty  
trees

Wave not less proudly that their ancestors  
Moulder beneath them. Oh, there is not  
lost 80

One of earth's charms: upon her bosom  
yet,

After the flight of untold centuries,  
The freshness of her far beginning lies  
And yet shall lie. Life mocks the idle  
hate

Of his arch-enemy Death — yea, seats him-  
self

Upon the tyrant's throne — the sepulchre,  
And of the triumphs of his ghastly foe  
Makes his own nourishment. For he came  
forth

From thine own bosom, and shall have no  
end.

There have been holy men who hid  
themselves 90

Deep in the woody wilderness, and gave  
Their lives to thought and prayer, till they  
outlived

The generation born with them, nor seemed  
Less aged than the hoary trees and rocks  
Around them; — and there have been holy  
men

Who deemed it were not well to pass life  
thus.

But let me often to these solitudes  
Retire, and in thy presence reassure  
My feeble virtue. Here its enemies,  
The passions, at thy plainer footsteps shrink  
And tremble and are still. O God! when  
Thou 101

Dost scare the world with tempests, set on  
fire

The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or  
fill,

With all the waters of the firmament,  
The swift dark whirlwind that uproots the  
woods

And drowns the villages; when, at thy call,  
Uprises the great deep and throws himself  
Upon the continent, and overwhelms  
Its cities — who forgets not, at the sight

W.W.  
Just the  
into his  
bosom  
of them



Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,  
His pride, and lays his strifes and follies  
by ?

Oh, from these sterner aspects of thy face  
Spare me and mine, nor let us need the  
wrath

Of the mad unchained elements to teach  
Who rules them. Be it ours to meditate,  
In these calm shades, thy milder majesty,  
And to the beautiful order of thy works  
Learn to conform the order of our lives.<sup>1</sup>

1825.

1825.

JUNE <sup>2</sup>

I GAZED upon the glorious sky  
And the green mountains round,  
And thought that when I came to lie  
At rest within the ground,  
'T were pleasant, that in flowery June,  
When brooks send up a cheerful tune,  
And groves a joyous sound,  
The sexton's hand, my grave to make,  
The rich, green mountain-turf should break.

A cell within the frozen mould, 10  
A coffin borne through sleet,  
And icy clods above it rolled,  
While fierce the tempests beat —  
Away ! — I will not think of these —  
Blue be the sky and soft the breeze,  
Earth green beneath the feet,  
And be the damp mould gently pressed  
Into my narrow place of rest.

There through the long, long summer  
hours,  
The golden light should lie, 20  
And thick young herbs and groups of flow-  
ers  
Stand in their beauty by.

<sup>1</sup> These are lines ' of whose great rhythmical beauty it is scarcely possible to speak too highly.' (Pom.)

<sup>2</sup> Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles ' June.' The rhythmical flow, here, is even voluptuous — nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul — while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true Beauty. (Pom.)

The oriole should build and tell  
His love-tale close beside my cell;  
The idle butterfly  
Should rest him there, and there be heard  
The housewife bee and humming-bird.

And what if cheerful shouts at noon  
Come, from the village sent,  
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon 30  
With fairy laughter blent ?  
And what if, in the evening light,  
Betrothed lovers walk in sight  
Of my low monument ?  
I would the lovely scene around  
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know that I no more should see  
The season's glorious show,  
Nor would its brightness shine for me,  
Nor its wild music flow; 40  
But if, around my place of sleep,  
The friends I love should come to weep,  
They might not haste to go.  
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom  
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their softened hearts should bear  
The thought of what has been,  
And speak of one who cannot share  
The gladness of the scene;  
Whose part, in all the pomp that fills 50  
The circuit of the summer hills,  
Is that his grave is green;  
And deeply would their hearts rejoice  
To hear again his living voice.<sup>3</sup>

1825.

1826.

## OCTOBER

AY, thou art welcome, heaven's delicious  
breath !  
When woods begin to wear the crimson leaf,  
And suns grow meek, and the meek suns  
grow brief,  
And the year smiles as it draws near its  
death.  
Wind of the sunny south ! oh, still delay  
In the gay woods and in the golden air,  
Like to a good old age released from care,  
Journeying, in long serenity, away.  
In such a bright, late quiet, would that I

<sup>3</sup> Bryant died in the month of June (1878), and was buried in the beautiful village cemetery at Roslyn, Long Island.

Might wear out life like thee, 'mid bowers  
and brooks,  
And, dearer yet, the sunshine of kind looks,  
And music of kind voices ever nigh;  
And when my last sand twinkled in the  
glass,  
Pass silently from men, as thou dost pass.  
1826. 1826.

THE PAST <sup>1</sup>

THOU unrelenting Past!  
Strong are the barriers round thy dark  
domain,  
And fetters, sure and fast,  
Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.

Far in thy realm withdrawn,  
Old empires sit in sullenness and gloom,  
And glorious ages gone  
Lie deep within the shadow of thy womb.

Childhood, with all its mirth,  
Youth, Manhood, Age that draws us to the  
ground, 10  
And last, Man's Life on earth,  
Glide to thy dim dominions, and are bound.

Thou hast my better years;  
Thou hast my earlier friends, the good, the  
kind,  
Yielded to thee with tears —  
The venerable form, the exalted mind.

My spirit yearns to bring  
The lost ones back — yearns with desire  
intense,  
And struggles hard to wring  
Thy bolts apart, and pluck thy captives  
thence. 20

In vain; thy gates deny  
All passage save to those who hence de-  
part;  
Nor to the streaming eye  
Thou giv'st them back — nor to the broken  
heart.

In thy abysses hide  
Beauty and excellence unknown; to thee

<sup>1</sup> According to Godwin, Bryant considered this his  
best poem, setting it above 'Thanatopsis.'

The last stanza alludes to his father, and to a sister  
who died in her twenty-second year. See Godwin's *Life*,  
vol. i, p. 192.

Earth's wonder and her pride  
Are gathered, as the waters to the sea;

Labors of good to man,  
Unpublished charity, unbroken faith, 30  
Love, that midst grief began,  
And grew with years, and faltered not in  
death.

Full many a mighty name  
Lurks in thy depths, unuttered, unrevered;  
With thee are silent fame,  
Forgotten arts, and wisdom disappeared.

Thine for a space are they —  
Yet shalt thou yield thy treasures up at last:  
Thy gates shall yet give way,  
Thy bolts shall fall, inexorable Past! 40

All that of good and fair  
Has gone into thy womb from earliest time,  
Shall then come forth to wear  
The glory and the beauty of its prime.

They have not perished — no!  
Kind words, remembered voices once so  
sweet,  
Smiles, radiant long ago,  
And features, the great soul's apparent seat.

All shall come back; each tie  
Of pure affection shall be knit again; 50  
Alone shall Evil die,  
And Sorrow dwell a prisoner in thy reign.

And then shall I behold  
Him, by whose kind paternal side I sprung,  
And her, who, still and cold,  
Fills the next grave — the beautiful and  
young.

1828.

1829.

THE EVENING WIND <sup>2</sup>

SPIRIT that breathest through my lattice,  
thou

That cool'st the twilight of the sultry day,  
Gratefully flows thy freshness round my  
brow;

Thou hast been out upon the deep at  
play,

<sup>2</sup> This poem, by its imaginative treatment of nature,  
and by its artistic completeness, aroused Poe's great  
admiration. He speaks of the last lines in the third  
stanza as 'breathing all the spirit of Shelley.'

Riding all day the wild blue waves till now,  
 Roughening their crests, and scattering  
 high their spray,  
 And swelling the white sail. I welcome  
 thee  
 To the scorched land, thou wanderer of the  
 sea!

Nor I alone; a thousand bosoms round  
 Inhale thee in the fulness of delight; 10  
 And languid forms rise up, and pulses  
 bound  
 Livelier, at coming of the wind of night;  
 And, languishing to hear thy grateful  
 sound,  
 Lies the vast inland stretched beyond the  
 sight.  
 Go forth into the gathering shade; go  
 forth,  
 God's blessing breathed upon the fainting  
 earth!

Go, rock the little wood-bird in his nest,  
 Curl the still waters, bright with stars,  
 and rouse  
 The wide old wood from his majestic rest,  
 Summoning from the innumerable  
 boughs 20  
 The strange, deep harmonies that haunt  
 his breast:  
 Pleasant shall be thy way where meekly  
 bows  
 The shutting flower, and darkling waters  
 pass,  
 And where the o'ershadowing branches  
 sweep the grass.

The faint old man shall lean his silver head  
 To feel thee; thou shalt kiss the child  
 asleep,  
 And dry the moistened curls that over-  
 spread  
 His temples, while his breathing grows  
 more deep;  
 And they who stand about the sick man's  
 bed,  
 Shall joy to listen to thy distant sweep, 30  
 And softly part his curtains to allow  
 Thy visit, grateful to his burning brow.

Go — but the circle of eternal change,  
 Which is the life of Nature, shall re-  
 store,  
 With sounds and scents from all thy mighty  
 range,

Thee to thy birthplace of the deep once  
 more;  
 Sweet odors in the sea-air, sweet and  
 strange,  
 Shall tell the home-sick mariner of the  
 shore;  
 And, listening to thy murmur, he shall  
 deem  
 He hears the rustling leaf and running  
 stream. 40

1829.

1830.

### TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN<sup>1</sup>

THOU blossom bright with autumn dew,  
 And colored with the heaven's own blue,  
 That openest when the quiet light  
 Succeeds the keen and frosty night,

Thou comest not when violets lean  
 O'er wandering brooks and springs un-  
 seen,  
 Or columbines, in purple dressed,  
 Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,  
 When woods are bare and birds are  
 flown,  
 And frosts and shortening days portend  
 The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye  
 Look through its fringes to the sky,  
 Blue — blue — as if that sky let fall  
 A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see  
 The hour of death draw near to me,  
 Hope, blossoming within my heart,  
 May look to heaven as I depart.

1829.

1832.

<sup>1</sup> Compare with this poem Wordsworth's 'To the Small Celandine,' and others.

Notice that Bryant addresses his verses to a distinctively American flower; as later he chooses an American bird, the bobolink, for the subject of a poem which is to be contrasted with Wordsworth's 'To the Skylark,' 'To the Green Linnet,' etc. Bryant gives the reason for this choice in a letter to his brother John, February 19, 1832: 'I saw some lines by you to the skylark. Did you ever see such a bird? Let me counsel you to draw your images, in describing Nature, from what you observe around you, unless you are professedly composing a description of some foreign country, when, of course, you will learn what you can from books. The skylark is an English bird, and an American who has never visited Europe has no right to be in raptures about it.'

HYMN OF THE CITY

Not in the solitude  
Alone may man commune with Heaven, or  
see,  
Only in savage wood  
And sunny vale, the present Deity;  
Or only hear his voice  
Where the winds whisper and the waves re-  
joice.

Even here do I behold  
Thy steps, Almighty! — here, amidst the  
crowd  
Through the great city rolled,  
With everlasting murmur deep and loud —  
Choking the ways that wind  
'Mongst the proud piles, the work of hu-  
man kind.

Thy golden sunshine comes  
From the round heaven, and on their  
dwellings lies  
And lights their inner homes;  
For them Thou fill'st with air the unbounded  
skies,  
And givest them the stores  
Of ocean, and the harvests of its shores.

Thy Spirit is around,  
Quickening the restless mass that sweeps  
along;  
And this eternal sound —  
Voices and footfalls of the numberless  
throng —  
Like the resounding sea,  
Or like the rainy tempest, speaks of Thee.

And when the hour of rest  
Comes, like a calm upon the mid-sea  
brine,  
Hushing its billowy breast —  
The quiet of that moment too is thine;  
It breathes of Him who keeps  
The vast and helpless city while it sleeps. 30  
1830? 1830.

SONG OF MARION'S MEN<sup>1</sup>

Our band is few but true and tried,  
Our leader frank and bold;

<sup>1</sup> The exploits of General Francis Marion, the famous partisan warrior of South Carolina, form an interesting chapter in the annals of the American Revolution. The British troops were so harassed by the irregular

The British soldier trembles<sup>2</sup>  
When Marion's name is told.  
Our fortress is the good greenwood,  
Our tent the cypress-tree;  
We know the forest round us,  
As seamen know the sea.  
We know its walls of thorny vines,  
Its glades of reedy grass,  
Its safe and silent islands  
Within the dark morass.

10

Woe to the English soldiery  
That little dread us near!  
On them shall light at midnight  
A strange and sudden fear:  
When, waking to their tents on fire,  
They grasp their arms in vain,  
And they who stand to face us  
Are beat to earth again;  
And they who fly in terror deem  
A mighty host behind,  
And hear the tramp of thousands  
Upon the hollow wind.

20

Then sweet the hour that brings release  
From danger and from toil:  
We talk the battle over,  
And share the battle's spoil.  
The woodland rings with laugh and shout,  
As if a hunt were up,  
And woodland flowers are gathered  
To crown the soldier's cup.  
With merry songs we mock the wind  
That in the pine-top grieves,  
And slumber long and sweetly  
On beds of oaken leaves.

30

Well knows the fair and friendly moon  
The band that Marion leads —  
The glitter of their rifles,  
The scampering of their steeds.

40

and successful warfare which he kept up at the head of a few daring followers, that they sent an officer to remonstrate with him for not coming into the open field and fighting 'like a gentleman and a Christian.' (BRYANT.)

On the occasion of a reception given to Bryant in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1873, one of the speakers said that the 'Song of Marion's Men' had been sung in many a Southern bivouac, and warmed the soldier's heart at many a Confederate camp-fire.' See Godwin's *Life of Bryant*, vol. ii, pp. 330, 331.

<sup>2</sup> In the edition of Bryant's poems published in England in 1832, and edited by Washington Irving, this line was changed to

The foeman trembles in his camp.

Considerable discussion over this change arose later in America, of which a full account can be found in Bigelow's *Life of Bryant*, pp. 129-139.

'Tis life to guide the fiery barb  
 Across the moonlight plain;  
 'Tis life to feel the night-wind  
 That lifts the tossing mane.  
 A moment in the British camp —  
 A moment — and away  
 Back to the pathless forest,  
 Before the peep of day.

Grave men there are by broad Santee,  
 Grave men with hoary hairs; 50  
 Their hearts are all with Marion,  
 For Marion are their prayers.  
 And lovely ladies greet our band  
 With kindest welcoming,  
 With smiles like those of summer,  
 And tears like those of spring.  
 For them we wear these trusty arms,  
 And lay them down no more  
 Till we have driven the Briton,  
 Forever, from our shore. 60

1831.

1831.

### THE PRAIRIES<sup>1</sup>

THESE are the gardens of the Desert,  
 these  
 The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,  
 For which the speech of England has no  
 name —  
 The Prairies. I behold them for the first,  
 And my heart swells, while the dilated  
 sight  
 Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo! they  
 stretch,  
 In airy undulations, far away,  
 As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,  
 Stood still, with all his rounded billows  
 fixed,

<sup>1</sup> See the account of Bryant's first visit to the West, in Godwin's *Life*, vol. i, pp. 282-286. Especially significant is a passage from Bryant's letter to Richard H. Dana: 'I have seen the great West, where I ate corn and hominy, slept in log houses, with twenty men, women, and children in the same room. . . . At Jacksonville, where my two brothers live, I got on a horse, and travelled about a hundred miles to the northward over the immense prairies, with scattered settlements, on the edges of the groves. These prairies, of a soft, fertile garden soil, and a smooth undulating surface, on which you may put a horse to full speed, covered with high, thinly growing grass, full of weeds and gaudy flowers, and destitute of bushes or trees, perpetually brought to my mind the idea of their having been once cultivated. They looked to me like the fields of a race which had passed away, whose enclosures and habitations had decayed, but on whose vast and rich plains, smoothed and levelled by tillage, the forest had not yet encroached.'

And motionless forever. — Motionless? —  
 No — they are all unchained again. The  
 clouds 11  
 Sweep over with their shadows, and, be-  
 neath,  
 The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;  
 Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase  
 The sunny ridges. Breezes of the South!  
 Who toss the golden and the flame-like  
 flowers,  
 And pass the prairie-hawk that, poised on  
 high,  
 Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not<sup>2</sup> —  
 ye have played  
 Among the palms of Mexico and vines  
 Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid  
 brooks 20  
 That from the fountains of Sonora glide  
 Into the calm Pacific — have ye fanned  
 A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?  
 Man hath no power in all this glorious  
 work:  
 The hand that built the firmament hath  
 heaved  
 And smoothed these verdant swells, and  
 sown their slopes  
 With herbage, planted them with island  
 groves,  
 And hedged them round with forests. Fit-  
 ting floor  
 For this magnificent temple of the sky —  
 With flowers whose glory and whose mul-  
 titude 30  
 Rival the constellations! The great hea-  
 vens  
 Seem to stoop down upon the scene in  
 love, —  
 A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,  
 Than that which bends above our eastern  
 hills.

As o'er the verdant waste I guide my  
 steed,  
 Among the high rank grass that sweeps his  
 sides  
 The hollow beating of his footstep seems  
 A sacrilegious sound. I think of those  
 Upon whose rest he tramples. Are they  
 here —  
 The dead of other days? — and did the  
 dust 40  
 Of these fair solitudes once stir with life

<sup>2</sup> I have seen the prairie-hawk balancing himself in the air for hours together, apparently over the same spot; probably watching his prey. (BRYANT.)

And burn with passion? Let the mighty  
     mounds  
 That overlook the rivers, or that rise  
 In the dim forest crowded with old oaks,  
 Answer. A race, that long has passed  
     away,  
 Built them; — a disciplined and populous  
     race  
 Heaped, with long toil, the earth, while yet  
     the Greek  
 Was hewing the Pentelicus to forms  
 Of symmetry, and rearing on its rock  
 The glittering Parthenon. These ample  
     fields  
 Nourished their harvests, here their herds  
     were fed,  
 When haply by their stalls the bison lowed,  
 And bowed his maned shoulder to the yoke.  
 All day this desert murmured with their  
     toils,  
 Till twilight blushed, and lovers walked,  
     and wooed  
 In a forgotten language, and old tunes,  
 From instruments of unremembered form,  
 Gave the soft winds a voice. The red man  
     came —  
 The roaming hunter tribes, warlike and  
     fierce,  
 And the mound-builders vanished from the  
     earth.  
 The solitude of centuries untold  
 Has settled where they dwelt. The  
     prairie-wolf  
 Hunts in their meadows, and his fresh-dug  
     den  
 Yawns by my path. The gopher mines the  
     ground  
 Where stood their swarming cities. All is  
     gone;  
 All — save the piles of earth that hold  
     their bones,  
 The platforms where they worshipped un-  
     known gods,  
 The barriers which they builded from the  
     soil  
 To keep the foe at bay — till o'er the walls  
 The wild beleaguers broke, and, one by  
     one,  
 The strongholds of the plain were forced,  
     and heaped  
 With corpses. The brown vultures of the  
     wood  
 Flocked to those vast uncovered sepulchres,  
 And sat unscared and silent at their feast.  
 Haply some solitary fugitive,

Lurking in marsh and forest, till the sense  
 Of desolation and of fear became  
 Bitterer than death, yielded himself to  
     die.  
 Man's better nature triumphed then. Kind  
     words  
 Welcomed and soothed him; the rude  
     conquerors  
 Seated the captive with their chiefs; he  
     chose  
 A bride among their maidens, and at length  
 Seemed to forget — yet ne'er forgot — the  
     wife  
 Of his first love, and her sweet little ones,  
 Butchered, amid their shrieks, with all his  
     race.

Thus change the forms of being. Thus  
     arise  
 Races of living things, glorious in strength,  
 And perish, as the quickening breath of  
     God  
 Fills them, or is withdrawn. The red man,  
     too,  
 Has left the blooming wilds he ranged so  
     long,  
 And, nearer to the Rocky Mountains, sought  
 A wilder hunting-ground. The beaver builds  
 No longer by these streams, but far away,  
 On waters whose blue surface ne'er gave  
     back  
 The white man's face — among Missouri's  
     springs,  
 And pools whose issues swell the Oregon —  
 He rears his little Venice. In these plains  
 The bison feeds no more. Twice twenty  
     leagues  
 Beyond remotest smoke of hunter's camp,  
 Roams the majestic brute, in herds that  
     shake  
 The earth with thundering steps — yet here  
     I meet  
 His ancient footprints stamped beside the  
     pool.

Still this great solitude is quick with life.  
 Myriads of insects, gaudy as the flowers  
 They flutter over, gentle quadrupeds,  
 And birds, that scarce have learned the  
     fear of man,  
 Are here, and sliding reptiles of the ground,  
 Startlingly beautiful. The graceful deer  
 Bounds to the wood at my approach. The  
     bee,  
 A more adventurous colonist than man,

With whom he came across the eastern  
 deep,  
 Fills the savannas with his murmurings,  
 And hides his sweets, as in the golden age,  
 Within the hollow oak. I listen long  
 To his domestic hum, and think I hear  
 The sound of that advancing multitude  
 Which soon shall fill these deserts. From  
 the ground  
 Comes up the laugh of children, the soft  
 voice  
 Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn  
 hymn  
 Of Sabbath worshippers. The low of herds  
 Blends with the rustling of the heavy  
 grain  
 Over the dark brown furrows. All at once  
 A fresher wind sweeps by, and breaks my  
 dream,  
 And I am in the wilderness alone.  
 1832. 1833.

### THE BATTLE-FIELD

ONCE this soft turf, this rivulet's sands,  
 Were trampled by a hurrying crowd,  
 And fiery hearts and armed hands  
 Encountered in the battle-cloud.

Ah! never shall the land forget  
 How gushed the life-blood of her brave —  
 Gushed, warm with hope and courage yet,  
 Upon the soil they fought to save.

Now all is calm, and fresh, and still;  
 Alone the chirp of flitting bird, 10  
 And talk of children on the hill,  
 And bell of wandering kine, are heard.

No solemn host goes trailing by  
 The black-mouthed gun and staggering  
 wain;  
 Men start not at the battle-cry,  
 Oh, be it never heard again!

Soon rested those who fought; but thou  
 Who minglest in the harder strife  
 For truths which men receive not now,  
 Thy warfare only ends with life. 20

A friendless warfare! lingering long  
 Through weary day and weary year,  
 A wild and many-weaponed throng  
 Hang on thy front, and flank, and rear.

Yet nerve thy spirit to the proof,  
 And blench not at thy chosen lot.  
 The timid good may stand aloof,  
 The sage may frown — yet faint thou  
 not.

Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,  
 The foul and hissing bolt of scorn; 30  
 For with thy side shall dwell, at last,  
 The victory of endurance born.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;  
 Th' eternal years of God are hers;  
 But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
 And dies among his worshippers.

Yea, though thou lie upon the dust,  
 When they who helped thee flee in fear,  
 Die full of hope and manly trust,  
 Like those who fell in battle here. 40

Another hand thy sword shall wield,  
 Another hand the standard wave,  
 Till from the trumpet's mouth is pealed  
 The blast of triumph o'er thy grave.  
 1837. 1837.

### THE ANTIQUITY OF FREEDOM

HERE are old trees, tall oaks, and gnarled  
 pines,  
 That stream with gray-green mosses; here  
 the ground  
 Was never trenched by spade, and flowers  
 spring up  
 Unsown, and die ungathered. It is sweet  
 To linger here, among the flitting birds  
 And leaping squirrels, wandering brooks,  
 and winds  
 That shake the leaves, and scatter, as they  
 pass,  
 A fragrance from the cedars, thickly set  
 With pale-blue berries. In these peaceful  
 shades —  
 Peaceful, unpruned, immeasurably old — 10  
 My thoughts go up the long dim path of  
 years,  
 Back to the earliest days of liberty.

O FREEDOM! thou art not, as poets  
 dream,  
 A fair young girl, with light and delicate  
 limbs,  
 And wavy tresses gushing from the cap



With which the Roman master crowned  
his slave  
When he took off the gyves. A bearded  
man,  
Armed to the teeth, art thou; one mailed  
hand  
Grasps the broad shield, and one the sword;  
thy brow,  
Glorious in beauty though it be, is scarred  
With tokens of old wars; thy massive  
limbs  
Are strong with struggling. Power at thee  
has launched  
His bolts, and with his lightnings smitten  
thee;  
They could not quench the life thou hast  
from heaven;  
Merciless Power has dug thy dungeon  
deep,  
And his swart armorers, by a thousand  
fires,  
Have forged thy chain; yet, while he deems  
thee bound,  
The links are shivered, and the prison-walls  
Fall outward; terribly thou springest forth,  
As springs the flame above a burning pile,  
And shoutest to the nations, who return  
Thy shoutings, while the pale oppressor  
flies.

Thy birthright was not given by human  
hands:  
Thou wert twin-born with man. In plea-  
sant fields,  
While yet our race was few, thou sat'st  
with him,  
To tend the quiet flock and watch the stars,  
And teach the reed to utter simple airs.  
Thou by his side, amid the tangled wood,  
Didst war upon the panther and the wolf,  
His only foes; and thou with him didst  
draw  
The earliest furrow on the mountain-side,  
Soft with the deluge. Tyranny himself,  
Thy enemy, although of reverend look,  
Hoary with many years, and far obeyed,  
Is later born than thou; and as he meets  
The grave defiance of thine elder eye,  
The usurper trembles in his fastnesses.

Thou shalt wax stronger with the lapse  
of years,  
But he shall fade into a feeblar age —  
Feebler, yet subtler. He shall weave his  
snares,

And spring them on thy careless steps, and  
clap  
His withered hands, and from their ambush  
call  
His hordes to fall upon thee. He shall  
send  
Quaint maskers, wearing fair and gallant  
forms  
To catch thy gaze, and uttering graceful  
words  
To charm thy ear; while his sly imps, by  
stealth,  
Twine round thee threads of steel, light  
thread on thread,  
That grow to fetters; or bind down thy  
arms  
With chains concealed in chaplets. Oh!  
not yet  
Mayst thou unbrace thy corslet, nor lay  
by  
Thy sword; nor yet, O Freedom! close thy  
lids  
In slumber; for thine enemy never sleeps,  
And thou must watch and combat till the  
day  
Of the new earth and heaven. But wouldst  
thou rest  
Awhile from tumult and the frauds of  
men,  
These old and friendly solitudes invite  
Thy visit. They, while yet the forest-trees  
Were young upon the unviolated earth,  
And yet the moss-stains on the rock were  
new,  
Beheld thy glorious childhood, and re-  
joiced.

1842.

1842.

### 'O MOTHER OF A MIGHTY RACE'

O MOTHER of a mighty race,  
Yet lovely in thy youthful grace!  
The elder dames, thy haughty peers,  
Admire and hate thy blooming years.  
With words of shame  
And taunts of scorn they join thy name.

For on thy cheeks the glow is spread  
That tints thy morning hills with red;  
Thy step — the wild-deer's rustling feet  
Within thy woods are not more fleet;  
Thy hopeful eye  
Is bright as thine own sunny sky.



Ay, let them rail — those haughty ones,  
While safe thou dwellest with thy sons.  
They do not know how loved thou art,  
How many a fond and fearless heart

Would rise to throw  
Its life between thee and the foe.

They know not, in their hate and pride,  
What virtues with thy children bide; 20  
How true, how good, thy graceful maids  
Make bright, like flowers, the valley-shades;

What generous men  
Spring, like thine oaks, by hill and glen; —

What cordial welcomes greet the guest  
By thy lone rivers of the West;  
How faith is kept, and truth revered,  
And man is loved, and God is feared,

In woodland homes, 30  
And where the ocean border foams.

There's freedom at thy gates and rest  
For Earth's down-trodden and opprest,  
A shelter for the hunted head,  
For the starved laborer toil and bread.

Power, at thy bounds,  
Stops and calls back his baffled hounds.

O fair young mother! on thy brow  
Shall sit a nobler grace than now.  
Deep in the brightness of the skies  
The thronging years in glory rise, 40

And, as they fleet,  
Drop strength and riches at thy feet.

Thine eye, with every coming hour,  
Shall brighten, and thy form shall tower;  
And when thy sisters, elder born,  
Would brand thy name with words of  
scorn,

Before thine eye,  
Upon their lips the taunt shall die.

1846.

1847.

### THE PLANTING OF THE APPLE- TREE

COME, let us plant the apple-tree.  
Cleave the tough greensward with the  
spade;

Wide let its hollow bed be made;  
There gently lay the roots, and there  
Sift the dark mould with kindly care,  
And press it o'er them tenderly,

As, round the sleeping infant's feet,  
We softly fold the cradle-sheet;  
So plant we the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree? 10  
Buds, which the breath of summer days  
Shall lengthen into leafy sprays;  
Boughs where the thrush, with crimson  
breast,

Shall haunt and sing and hide her nest;  
We plant, upon the sunny lea,  
A shadow for the noontide hour,  
A shelter from the summer shower,  
When we plant the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree?  
Sweets for a hundred flowery springs 20  
To load the May-wind's restless wings,  
When, from the orchard-row, he pours  
Its fragrance through our open doors;

A world of blossoms for the bee,  
Flowers for the sick girl's silent room,  
For the glad infant sprigs of bloom,  
We plant with the apple-tree.

What plant we in this apple-tree?  
Fruits that shall swell in sunny June,  
And redden in the August noon, 30  
And drop, when gentle airs come by,  
That fan the blue September sky,

While children come, with cries of  
glee,  
And seek them where the fragrant grass  
Betrays their bed to those who pass,  
At the foot of the apple-tree.

And when, above this apple-tree,  
The winter stars are quivering bright,  
And winds go howling through the night,  
Girls, whose young eyes o'erflow with mirth,  
Shall peel its fruit by cottage-hearth, 40

And guests in prouder homes shall see,  
Heaped with the grape of Cintra's vine  
And golden orange of the line,  
The fruit of the apple-tree.

The fruitage of this apple-tree  
Winds and our flag of stripe and star  
Shall bear to coasts that lie afar,  
Where men shall wonder at the view,  
And ask in what fair groves they grew; 50  
And sojourners beyond the sea  
Shall think of childhood's careless day,  
And long, long hours of summer play,  
In the shade of the apple-tree.

Each year shall give this apple-tree  
A broader flush of roseate bloom,  
A deeper maze of verdurous gloom,  
And loosen, when the frost-clouds lower,  
The crisp brown leaves in thicker shower.

The years shall come and pass, but we  
Shall hear no longer, where we lie, 61  
The summer's songs, the autumn's sigh,  
In the boughs of the apple-tree.

And time shall waste this apple-tree.  
Oh, when its aged branches throw  
Thin shadows on the ground below,  
Shall fraud and force and iron will  
Oppress the weak and helpless still?

What shall the tasks of mercy be,  
Amid the toils, the strifes, the tears 70  
Of those who live when length of years  
Is wasting this little apple-tree?

'Who planted this old apple-tree?'  
The children of that distant day  
Thus to some aged man shall say;  
And, gazing on its mossy stem,  
The gray-haired man shall answer them:  
'A poet of the land was he,  
Born in the rude but good old times;  
'T is said he made some quaint old rhymes,  
On planting the apple-tree.' 1 81  
1849. 1864.

### ROBERT OF LINCOLN

MERRILY swinging on brier and weed,  
Near to the nest of his little dame,  
Over the mountain-side or mead,  
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name:  
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
Spink, spank, spink;  
Snug and safe is that nest of ours,  
Hidden among the summer flowers.  
Chee, chee, chee.

<sup>1</sup> Compare a letter of Bryant's written November 17, 1846 (*Godwin's Life of Bryant*, vol. II, pp. 27, 28): 'I have been, and am, at my place on Long Island, planting and transplanting trees, in the mist; sixty or seventy; some for shade; most for fruit. Hereafter, men, whose existence is at present merely possible, will gather pears from the trees which I have set in the ground, and wonder what old covey — for in those days the slang terms of the present time, by the ordinary process of change in languages, will have become classical — what old covey of past ages planted them? Or they will walk in the shade of the mulberry, apricot, and cherry trees that I have set in a row beside a green lane, and think, if they think at all about the matter — for who can tell what the great-grandchildren of ours will think about — that they sprang up of themselves by the way.'

Robert of Lincoln is gayly drest, 10  
Wearing a bright black wedding-coat;  
White are his shoulders and white his crest.

Hear him call in his merry note:  
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
Spink, spank, spink;  
Look, what a nice new coat is mine,  
Sure there was never a bird so fine.  
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,  
Pretty and quiet, with plain brown  
wings, 20  
Passing at home a patient life,  
Broods in the grass while her husband  
sings:

Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
Spink, spank, spink;  
Brood, kind creature; you need not fear  
Thieves and robbers while I am here.  
Chee, chee, chee.

Modest and shy as a nun is she;  
One weak chirp is her only note.  
Braggart and prince of braggarts is he, 30  
Pouring boasts from his little throat:  
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
Spink, spank, spink;  
Never was I afraid of man;  
Catch me, cowardly knaves, if you can!  
Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,  
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight!  
There as the mother sits all day,  
Robert is singing with all his might: 40  
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
Spink, spank, spink;  
Nice good wife, that never goes out,  
Keeping house while I frolic about.  
Chee, chee, chee.

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,  
Six wide mouths are open for food;  
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,  
Gathering seeds for the hungry brood. 50  
Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
Spink, spank, spink;  
This new life is likely to be  
Hard for a gay young fellow like me.  
Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln at length is made  
Sober with work, and silent with care;  
Off is his holiday garment laid,

Half forgotten that merry air:  
 Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
 Spink, spank, spink; 60  
 Nobody knows but my mate and I  
 Where our nest and our nestlings lie.  
 Chee, chee, chee.

Summer wanes; the children are grown;  
 Fun and frolic no more he knows;  
 Robert of Lincoln's a humdrum crone;  
 Off he flies, and we sing as he goes:  
 Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,  
 Spink, spank, spink;  
 When you can pipe that merry old strain, 70  
 Robert of Lincoln, come back again.  
 Chee, chee, chee.

1855.

1855.

### OUR COUNTRY'S CALL

LAY down the axe; fling by the spade;  
 Leave in its track the toiling plough;  
 The rifle and the bayonet-blade  
 For arms like yours were fitter now;  
 And let the hands that ply the pen  
 Quit the light task, and learn to wield  
 The horseman's crooked brand, and rein  
 The charger on the battle-field.

Our country calls; away! away!  
 To where the blood-stream blots the  
 green. 10  
 Strike to defend the gentlest sway  
 That Time in all his course has seen.  
 See, from a thousand coverts — see,  
 Spring the armed foes that haunt her  
 track;  
 They rush to smite her down, and we  
 Must beat the banded traitors back.

Ho! sturdy as the oaks ye cleave,  
 And moved as soon to fear and flight,  
 Men of the glade and forest! leave  
 Your woodcraft for the field of fight. 20  
 The arms that wield the axe must pour  
 An iron tempest on the foe;  
 His serried ranks shall reel before  
 The arm that lays the panther low.

And ye who breast the mountain-storm  
 By grassy steep or highland lake,  
 Come, for the land ye love, to form  
 A bulwark that no foe can break.  
 Stand, like your own gray cliffs that mock

The whirlwind, stand in her defence; 30  
 The blast as soon shall move the rock  
 As rushing squadrons bear ye thence.

And ye whose homes are by her grand  
 Swift rivers, rising far away,  
 Come from the depth of her green land,  
 As mighty in your march as they;  
 As terrible as when the rains  
 Have swelled them over bank and bourne,  
 With sudden floods to drown the plains  
 And sweep along the woods uptorn. 40

And ye who throng, beside the deep,  
 Her ports and hamlets of the strand,  
 In number like the waves that leap  
 On his long-murmuring marge of sand —  
 Come like that deep, when, o'er his brim,  
 He rises, all his floods to pour,  
 And flings the proudest barks that swim,  
 A helpless wreck, against the shore!

Few, few were they whose swords of old  
 Won the fair land in which we dwell; 50  
 But we are many, we who hold  
 The grim resolve to guard it well.  
 Strike, for that broad and goodly land,  
 Blow after blow, till men shall see  
 That Might and Right move hand in hand,  
 And glorious must their triumph be!  
*September, 1861.* 1861.

### THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF THE SNOW

*Alice.* One of your old-world stories,  
 Uncle John,  
 Such as you tell us by the winter fire,  
 Till we all wonder it is grown so late.

*Uncle John.* The story of the witch that  
 ground to death  
 Two children in her mill, or will you have  
 The tale of Goody Cutpurse?

*Alice.* Nay, now, nay;  
 Those stories are too childish, Uncle John,  
 Too childish even for little Willy here,  
 And I am older, two good years, than he;  
 No, let us have a tale of elves that ride, 10  
 By night, with jingling reins, or gnomes of  
 the mine,

Or water-fairies, such as you know how  
 To spin, till Willy's eyes forget to wink,  
 And good Aunt Mary, busy as she is,  
 Lays down her knitting.

*Uncle John.* Listen to me, then.  
 'T was in the olden time, long, long ago,  
 And long before the great oak at our door  
 Was yet an acorn, on a mountain's side  
 Lived, with his wife, a cottager. They dwelt  
 Beside a glen and near a dashing brook, 20  
 A pleasant spot in spring, where first the  
     wren  
 Was heard to chatter, and, among the grass,  
 Flowers opened earliest; but when winter  
     came,  
 That little brook was fringed with other  
     flowers, —  
 White flowers, with crystal leaf and stem,  
     that grew  
 In clear November nights. And, later still,  
 That mountain-glen was filled with drifted  
     snows  
 From side to side, that one might walk  
     across;  
 While, many a fathom deep, below, the  
     brook  
 Sang to itself, and leaped and trotted on 30  
 Unfrozen, o'er its pebbles, toward the vale.

*Alice.* A mountain-side, you said; the  
     Alps, perhaps,  
 Or our own Alleghanies.

*Uncle John.* Not so fast,  
 My young geographer, for then the Alps,  
 With their broad pastures, haply were un-  
     trod  
 Of herdsman's foot, and never human voice  
 Had sounded in the woods that overhang  
 Our Alleghanies' streams. I think it was  
 Upon the slopes of the great Caucasus,  
 Or where the rivulets of Ararat 40  
 Seek the Armenian vales. That mountain  
     rose  
 So high, that, on its top, the winter snow  
 Was never melted, and the cottagers  
 Among the summer blossoms, far below,  
 Saw its white peaks in August from their  
     door.

One little maiden, in that cottage-home,  
 Dwelt with her parents, light of heart and  
     limb,  
 Bright, restless, thoughtless, flitting here  
     and there,  
 Like sunshine on the uneasy ocean-waves,  
 And sometimes she forgot what she was bid,  
 As Alice does.

*Alice.* Or Willy, quite as oft. 51

*Uncle John.* But you are older, Alice, two  
     good years,  
 And should be wiser. Eva was the name

Of this young maiden, now twelve summers  
     old.

Now you must know that, in those early  
     times,  
 When autumn days grew pale, there came  
     a troop  
 Of childlike forms from that cold mountain-  
     top;  
 With trailing garments through the air they  
     came,  
 Or walked the ground with girded loins,  
     and threw  
 Spangles of silvery frost upon the grass, 60  
 And edged the brooks with glistening para-  
     pets,  
 And built it crystal bridges, touched the  
     pool,  
 And turned its face to glass, or, rising  
     thence,  
 They shook from their full laps the soft,  
     light snow,  
 And buried the great earth, as autumn  
     winds  
 Bury the forest-floor in heaps of leaves.

A beautiful race were they, with baby  
     brows,  
 And fair, bright locks, and voices like the  
     sound  
 Of steps on the crisp snow, in which they  
     talked  
 With man, as friend with friend. A merry  
     sight 70  
 It was, when, crowding round the traveller,  
 They smote him with their heaviest snow-  
     flakes, flung  
 Needles of frost in handfuls at his cheeks,  
 And, of the light wreaths of his smoking  
     breath,  
 Wove a white fringe for his brown beard,  
     and laughed  
 Their slender laugh to see him wink and  
     grin  
 And make grim faces as he floundered on.  
 But, when the spring came on, what ter-  
     ror reigned  
 Among these Little People of the Snow!  
 To them the sun's warm beams were shafts  
     of fire, 80  
 And the soft south-wind was the wind of  
     death.  
 Away they flew, all with a pretty scowl  
 Upon their childish faces, to the north,  
 Or scampered upward to the mountain's  
     top,  
 And there defied their enemy, the Spring;

Skipping and dancing on the frozen peaks,  
And moulding little snow-balls in their  
palms,  
And rolling them, to crush her flowers be-  
low, 88  
Down the steep snow-fields.

*Alice.* That, too, must have been  
A merry sight to look at.

*Uncle John.* You are right,  
But I must speak of graver matters now.

Midwinter was the time, and Eva stood,  
Within the cottage, all prepared to dare  
The outer cold, with ample furry robe  
Close-belted round her waist, and boots of  
fur,

And a broad kerchief, which her mother's  
hand

Had closely drawn about her ruddy cheek.  
'Now, stay not long abroad,' said the  
good dame,

'For sharp is the outer air, and, mark me  
well,

Go not upon the snow beyond the spot 100  
Where the great linden bounds the neigh-  
boring field.'

The little maiden promised, and went  
forth,

And climbed the rounded snow-swells firm  
with frost

Beneath her feet, and slid, with balancing  
arms,

Into the hollows. Once, as up a drift  
She slowly rose, before her, in the way,

She saw a little creature, lily-cheeked,  
With flowing flaxen locks, and faint blue  
eyes,

That gleamed like ice, and robe that only  
seemed

Of a more shadowy whiteness than her  
cheek. 110

On a smooth bank she sat.

*Alice.* She must have been  
One of your Little People of the Snow.

*Uncle John.* She was so, and, as Eva  
now drew near,

The tiny creature bounded from her seat;  
'And come,' she said, 'my pretty friend;  
to-day

We will be playmates. I have watched  
thee long,

And seen how well thou lov'st to walk these  
drifts,

And scoop their fair sides into little cells,  
And carve them with quaint figures, huge-  
limbed men, 119

Lions, and griffins. We will have, to-day,  
A merry ramble over these bright fields,  
And thou shalt see what thou hast never  
seen.'

On went the pair, until they reached the  
bound

Where the great linden stood, set deep in  
snow,

Up to the lower branches. 'Here we  
stop,'

Said Eva, 'for my mother has my word  
That I will go no farther than this tree.'

Then the snow-maiden laughed: 'And  
what is this?

This fear of the pure snow, the innocent  
snow,

That never harmed aught living? Thou  
mayst roam 130

For leagues beyond this garden, and return  
In safety; here the grim wolf never prowls,

And here the eagle of our mountain-crag  
Preys not in winter. I will show the  
way,

And bring thee safely home. Thy mother,  
sure,

Counselled thee thus because thou hadst no  
guide.'

By such smooth words was Eva won to  
break

Her promise, and went on with her new  
friend,

Over the glistening snow and down a bank  
Where a white shelf, wrought by the eddy-  
ing wind, 140

Like to a billow's crest in the great sea,  
Curtained an opening. 'Look, we enter  
here.'

And straight, beneath the fair o'erhanging  
fold,

Entered the little pair that hill of snow,  
Walking along a passage with white walls,

And a white vault above where snow-stars  
shed

A wintry twilight. Eva moved in awe,  
And held her peace, but the snow-maiden  
smiled,

And talked and tripped along, as down the  
way,

Deeper they went into that mountainous  
drift. 150

And now the white walls widened, and  
the vault

Swelled upward, like some vast cathedral-  
dome,

Such as the Florentine, who bore the name

Of heaven's most potent angel, reared  
 long since,  
 Or the unknown builder of that wondrous  
 fane,  
 The glory of Burgos. Here a garden lay,  
 In which the Little People of the Snow  
 Were wont to take their pastime when  
 their tasks  
 Upon the mountain's side and in the clouds  
 Were ended. Here they taught the silent  
 frost 160  
 To mock, in stem and spray, and leaf and  
 flower,  
 The growths of summer. Here the palm  
 upreared  
 Its white columnar trunk and spotless  
 sheaf  
 Of plume-like leaves; here cedars, huge as  
 those  
 Of Lebanon, stretched far their level  
 boughs,  
 Yet pale and shadowless; the sturdy oak  
 Stood, with its huge gnarled roots of seem-  
 ing strength,  
 Fast anchored in the glistening bank; light  
 sprays  
 Of myrtle, roses in their bud and bloom,  
 Drooped by the winding walks; yet all  
 seemed wrought 170  
 Of stainless alabaster; up the trees  
 Ran the lithe jessamine, with stalk and  
 leaf  
 Colorless as her flowers. 'Go softly on,'  
 Said the snow-maiden; 'touch not, with  
 thy hand,  
 The frail creation round thee, and beware  
 To sweep it with thy skirts. Now look  
 above.  
 How sumptuously these bowers are lighted  
 up  
 With shifting gleams that softly come and  
 go!  
 These are the northern lights, such as thou  
 seest  
 In the midwinter nights, cold, wandering  
 flames, 180  
 That float with our processions, through  
 the air;  
 And here, within our winter palaces,  
 Mimic the glorious daybreak.' Then she  
 told  
 How, when the wind, in the long winter  
 nights,  
 Swept the light snows into the hollow dell,  
 She and her comrades guided to its place

Each wandering flake, and piled them  
 quaintly up,  
 In shapely colonnade and glistening arch,  
 With shadowy aisles between, or bade them  
 grow, 189  
 Beneath their little hands, to bowery walks  
 In gardens such as these, and, o'er them all,  
 Built the broad roof. 'But thou hast yet  
 to see  
 A fairer sight,' she said, and led the way  
 To where a window of pellucid ice  
 Stood in the wall of snow, beside their  
 path.  
 'Look, but thou mayst not enter.' Eva  
 looked,  
 And lo! a glorious hall, from whose high  
 vault  
 Stripes of soft light, ruddy and delicate  
 green,  
 And tender blue, flowed downward to the  
 floor  
 And far around, as if the ærial hosts, 200  
 That march on high by night, with beamy  
 spears,  
 And streaming banners, to that place had  
 brought  
 Their radiant flags to grace a festival.  
 And in that hall a joyous multitude  
 Of those by whom its glistening walls were  
 reared,  
 Whirled in a merry dance to silvery sounds,  
 That rang from cymbals of transparent ice,  
 And ice-cups, quivering to the skilful touch  
 Of little fingers. Round and round they  
 flew,  
 As when, in spring, about a chimney-top,  
 A cloud of twittering swallows, just re-  
 turned, 211  
 Wheel round and round, and turn and wheel  
 again,  
 Unwinding their swift track. So rapidly  
 Flowed the meandering stream of that fair  
 dance,  
 Beneath that dome of light. Bright eyes  
 that looked  
 From under lily-brows, and gauzy scarfs  
 Sparkling like snow-wreaths in the early  
 sun,  
 Shot by the window in their mazy whirl.  
 And there stood Eva, wondering at the  
 sight  
 Of those bright revellers and that graceful  
 sweep 220  
 Of motion as they passed her; — long she  
 gazed,



And listened long to the sweet sounds that  
thrilled  
The frosty air, till now the encroaching  
cold  
Recalled her to herself. 'Too long, too  
long  
I linger here,' she said, and then she sprang  
Into the path, and with a hurried step  
Followed it upward. Ever by her side  
Her little guide kept pace. As on they  
went,  
Eva bemoaned her fault: 'What must they  
think —  
The dear ones in the cottage, while so long,  
Hour after hour, I stay without? I know  
That they will seek me far and near, and  
weep  
To find me not. How could I, wickedly,  
Neglect the charge they gave me?' As  
she spoke,  
The hot tears started to her eyes; she knelt  
In the mid-path. 'Father! forgive this  
sin;  
Forgive myself I cannot' — thus she  
prayed,  
And rose and hastened onward. When, at  
last,  
They reached the outer air, the clear north  
breathed  
A bitter cold, from which she shrank with  
dread,  
But the snow-maiden bounded as she felt  
The cutting blast, and uttered shouts of  
joy,  
And skipped, with boundless glee, from  
drift to drift,  
And danced round Eva, as she labored up  
The mounds of snow. 'Ah me! I feel my  
eyes  
Grow heavy,' Eva said; 'they swim with  
sleep;  
I cannot walk for utter weariness,  
And I must rest a moment on this bank,  
But let it not be long.' As thus she spoke,  
In half-formed words, she sank on the  
smooth snow,  
With closing lids. Her guide composed  
the robe  
About her limbs, and said: 'A pleasant spot  
Is this to slumber in; on such a couch  
Oft have I slept away the winter night,  
And had the sweetest dreams.' So Eva  
slept,  
But slept in death; for when the power of  
frost

Locks up the motions of the living frame,  
The victim passes to the realm of Death  
Through the dim porch of Sleep. The little  
guide,  
Watching beside her, saw the hues of life  
Fade from the fair smooth brow and  
rounded cheek,  
As fades the crimson from a morning  
cloud,  
Till they were white as marble, and the  
breath  
Had ceased to come and go, yet knew she  
not  
At first that this was death. But when she  
marked  
How deep the paleness was, how motionless  
That once lithe form, a fear came over her.  
She strove to wake the sleeper, plucked her  
robe,  
And shouted in her ear, but all in vain;  
The life had passed away from those young  
limbs.  
Then the snow-maiden raised a wailing  
cry,  
Such as the dweller in some lonely wild,  
Sleepless through all the long December  
night,  
Hears when the mournful East begins to  
blow.  
But suddenly was heard the sound of  
steps,  
Grating on the crisp snow; the cottagers  
Were seeking Eva; from afar they saw  
The twain, and hurried toward them. As  
they came  
With gentle chidings ready on their lips,  
And marked that deathlike sleep, and heard  
the tale  
Of the snow-maiden, mortal anguish fell  
Upon their hearts, and bitter words of grief  
And blame were uttered: 'Cruel, cruel  
one,  
To tempt our daughter thus, and cruel we,  
Who suffered her to wander forth alone  
In this fierce cold!' They lifted the dear  
child,  
And bore her home and chafed her tender  
limbs,  
And strove, by all the simple arts they  
knew,  
To make the chilled blood move, and win  
the breath  
Back to her bosom; fruitlessly they strove;  
The little maid was dead. In blank de-  
spair

They stood, and gazed at her who never  
more

Should look on them. 'Why die we not  
with her?'

They said; 'Without her, life is bitterness.'

Now came the funeral-day; the simple  
folk

Of all that pastoral region gathered round  
To share the sorrow of the cottagers.

They carved a way into the mound of snow  
To the glen's side, and dug a little grave

In the smooth slope, and, following the bier,  
In long procession from the silent door, <sup>301</sup>

Chanted a sad and solemn melody:

'Lay her away to rest within the ground.

Yea, lay her down whose pure and innocent  
life

Was spotless as these snows; for she was  
reared

In love, and passed in love life's pleasant  
spring,

And all that now our tenderest love can  
do

Is to give burial to her lifeless limbs.'

They paused. A thousand slender voices  
round, <sup>309</sup>

Like echoes softly flung from rock and hill,  
Took up the strain, and all the hollow air

Seemed mourning for the dead; for, on  
that day,

The Little People of the Snow had come,  
From mountain-peak, and cloud, and icy

hall,  
To Eva's burial. As the murmur died,

The funeral-train renewed the solemn chant:

'Thou, Lord, hast taken her to be with  
Eve,

Whose gentle name was given her. Even  
so,

For so thy wisdom saw that it was best  
For her and us. We bring our bleeding

hearts, <sup>320</sup>  
And ask the touch of healing from thy

hand,  
As, with submissive tears, we render back

The lovely and beloved to Him who gave.'

They ceased. Again the plaintive mur-  
mur rose.

From shadowy skirts of low-hung cloud it  
came,

And wide white fields, and fir-trees capped  
with snow,

Shivering to the sad sounds. They sank  
away

To silence in the dim-seen distant woods.

The little grave was closed; the funeral-  
train

Departed; winter wore away; the Spring  
Steeped, with her quickening rains, the

violet-tufts, <sup>331</sup>  
By fond hands planted where the maiden

slept.  
But, after Eva's burial, never more

The Little People of the Snow were seen  
By human eye, nor ever human ear

Heard from their lips articulate speech  
again;

For a decree went forth to cut them off,  
Forever, from communion with mankind.

The winter-clouds, along the mountainside,  
Rolled downward toward the vale, but no

fair form <sup>340</sup>  
Leaned from their folds, and, in the icy

glens,  
And aged woods, under snow-loaded pines,

Where once they made their haunt, was  
emptiness.

But ever, when the wintry days drew  
near,

Around that little grave, in the long night,  
Frost-wreaths were laid and tufts of silvery

rime  
In shape like blades and blossoms of the

field  
As one would scatter flowers upon a bier.

1863. 1864.

## THE POET

THOU who wouldst wear the name  
Of poet 'mid thy brethren of mankind,

And clothe in words of flame  
Thoughts that shall live within the gen-  
eral mind!

Deem not the framing of a deathless lay  
The pastime of a drowsy summer day.

But gather all thy powers,  
And wreak them on the verse that thou  
dost weave,

And in thy lonely hours,  
At silent morning or at wakeful eve, <sup>10</sup>

While the warm current tingles through  
thy veins

Set forth the burning words in fluent  
strains.

No smooth array of phrase,  
Artfully sought and ordered though it be,



Which the cold rhymers lay  
 Upon his page with languid industry,  
 Can wake the listless pulse to livelier  
 speed,  
 Or fill with sudden tears the eyes that  
 read.

The secret wouldst thou know  
 To touch the heart or fire the blood at  
 will ? 20

Let thine own eyes o'erflow;  
 Let thy lips quiver with the passionate  
 thrill;  
 Seize the great thought, ere yet its power  
 be past,  
 And bind, in words, the fleet emotion fast.

Then, should thy verse appear  
 Halting and harsh, and all unaptly  
 wrought,  
 Touch the crude line with fear,  
 Save in the moment of impassioned  
 thought;  
 Then summon back the original glow, and  
 mend  
 The strain with rapture that with fire was  
 penned. 30

Yet let no empty gust  
 Of passion find an utterance in thy lay,  
 A blast that whirls the dust  
 Along the howling street and dies away;  
 But feelings of calm power and mighty  
 sweep,  
 Like currents journeying through the wind-  
 less deep.

Seek'st thou, in living lays,  
 To limn the beauty of the earth and  
 sky ?  
 Before thine inner gaze  
 Let all that beauty in clear vision lie; 40  
 Look on it with exceeding love, and write  
 The words inspired by wonder and de-  
 light.

Of tempests wouldst thou sing,  
 Or tell of battles — make thyself a part  
 Of the great tumult; cling  
 To the tossed wreck with terror in thy  
 heart;  
 Scale, with the assaulting host, the ram-  
 part's height,  
 And strike and struggle in the thickest  
 fight.

So shalt thou frame a lay  
 That haply may endure from age to age,  
 And they who read shall say: 52  
 'What witchery hangs upon this poet's  
 page !  
 What art is his the written spells to find  
 That sway from mood to mood the willing  
 mind !'

1863.

1864.

### MY AUTUMN WALK

ON woodlands ruddy with autumn  
 The amber sunshine lies;  
 I look on the beauty round me,  
 And tears come into my eyes.

For the wind that sweeps the meadows  
 Blows out of the far Southwest,  
 Where our gallant men are fighting,  
 And the gallant dead are at rest.

The golden-rod is leaning,  
 And the purple aster waves 10  
 In a breeze from the land of battles,  
 A breath from the land of graves.

Full fast the leaves are dropping  
 Before that wandering breath;  
 As fast, on the field of battle,  
 Our brethren fall in death.

Beautiful over my pathway  
 The forest spoils are shed;  
 They are spotting the grassy hillocks  
 With purple and gold and red. 20

Beautiful is the death-sleep  
 Of those who bravely fight  
 In their country's holy quarrel,  
 And perish for the Right.

But who shall comfort the living,  
 The light of whose homes is gone:  
 The bride that, early widowed,  
 Lives broken-hearted on;

The matron whose sons are lying  
 In graves on a distant shore; 30  
 The maiden, whose promised husband  
 Comes back from the war no more ?

I look on the peaceful dwellings  
 Whose windows glimmer in sight,

With croft and garden and orchard,  
That bask in the mellow light;

And I know that, when our couriers  
With news of victory come,  
They will bring a bitter message  
Of hopeless grief to some. 40

Again I turn to the woodlands,  
And shudder as I see  
The mock-grape's blood-red banner  
Hung out on the cedar-tree;

And I think of days of slaughter,  
And the night-sky red with flames,  
On the Chattahoochee's meadows,  
And the wasted banks of the James.

Oh, for the fresh spring-season,  
When the groves are in their prime; 50  
And far away in the future  
Is the frosty autumn-time!

Oh, for that better season,  
When the pride of the foe shall yield,  
And the hosts of God and Freedom  
March back from the well-won field;

And the matron shall clasp her first-  
born  
With tears of joy and pride;  
And the scarred and war-worn lover  
Shall claim his promised bride! 60

The leaves are swept from the branches;  
But the living buds are there,  
With folded flower and foliage,  
To sprout in a kinder air.

October, 1864.

January, 1865.

### THE DEATH OF LINCOLN<sup>1</sup>

Oh, slow to smite and swift to spare,  
Gentle and merciful and just!  
Who, in the fear of God, didst bear  
The sword of power, a nation's trust!

In sorrow by thy bier we stand,  
Amid the awe that hushes all,  
And speak the anguish of a land  
That shook with horror at thy fall.

<sup>1</sup> Bryant wrote this poem for the day when Lincoln's body was carried in funeral procession through the streets of New York city.

Thy task is done; the bond are free:  
We bear thee to an honored grave,  
Whose proudest monument shall be  
The broken fetters of the slave.

Pure was thy life; its bloody close  
Hath placed thee with the sons of light,  
Among the noble host of those  
Who perished in the cause of Right.

\* April, 1865.

January, 1866.

### A LIFETIME

I sit in the early twilight,  
And, through the gathering shade,  
I look on the fields around me  
Where yet a child I played.

And I peer into the shadows,  
Till they seem to pass away,  
And the fields and their tiny brooklet  
Lie clear in the light of day.

A delicate child and slender,  
With locks of light-brown hair, 10  
From knoll to knoll is leaping  
In the breezy summer air.

He stoops to gather blossoms  
Where the running waters shine;  
And I look on him with wonder,  
His eyes are so like mine.

I look till the fields and brooklet  
Swim like a vision by,  
And a room in a lowly dwelling  
Lies clear before my eye. 20

There stand, in the clean-swept fireplace,  
Fresh boughs from the wood in bloom,  
And the birch-tree's fragrant branches  
Perfume the humble room.

And there the child is standing  
By a stately lady's knee,  
And reading of ancient peoples  
And realms beyond the sea:

Of the cruel King of Egypt  
Who made God's people slaves, 30  
And perished, with all his army,  
Drowned in the Red Sea waves;

Of Deborah who mustered  
Her brethren long oppressed,

And routed the heathen army,  
And gave her people rest;

And the sadder, gentler story  
How Christ, the crucified,  
With a prayer for those who slew Him,  
Forgave them as He died. 40

I look again, and there rises  
A forest wide and wild,  
And in it the boy is wandering,  
No longer a little child.

He murmurs his own rude verses  
As he roams the woods alone;  
And again I gaze with wonder,  
His eyes are so like my own.

I see him next in his chamber,  
Where he sits him down to write 50  
The rhymes he framed in his ramble,  
And he cons them with delight.

A kindly figure enters,  
A man of middle age,  
And points to a line just written,  
And 't is blotted from the page.

And next, in a hall of justice,  
Scarce grown to manly years,  
'Mid the hoary-headed wranglers  
The slender youth appears. 60

With a beating heart he rises,  
And with a burning cheek,  
And the judges kindly listen  
To hear the young man speak.

Another change, and I see him  
Approach his dwelling-place,  
Where a fair-haired woman meets him,  
With a smile on her young face —

A smile that spreads a sunshine  
On lip and cheek and brow; 70  
So sweet a smile there is not  
In all the wide earth now.

She leads by the hand their first-born,  
A fair-haired little one,  
And their eyes as they meet him sparkle  
Like brooks in the morning sun.

Another change, and I see him  
Where the city's ceaseless coil

Sends up a mighty murmur  
From a thousand modes of toil. 80

And there, 'mid the clash of presses,  
He plies the rapid pen  
In the battles of opinion,  
That divide the sons of men.

I look, and the clashing presses  
And the town are seen no more,  
But there is the poet wandering  
A strange and foreign shore.

He has crossed the mighty ocean  
To realms that lie afar, 90  
In the region of ancient story,  
Beneath the morning star.

And now he stands in wonder  
On an icy Alpine height;  
Now pitches his tent in the desert  
Where the jackal yells at night;

Now, far on the North Sea islands,  
Sees day on the midnight sky,  
Now gathers the fair strange fruitage  
Where the isles of the Southland lie.

I see him again at his dwelling, 101  
Where, over the little lake,  
The rose-trees droop in their beauty  
To meet the image they make.

Though years have whitened his temples,  
His eyes have the first look still,  
Save a shade of settled sadness,  
A forecast of coming ill.

For in that pleasant dwelling,  
On the rack of ceaseless pain, 110  
Lies she who smiled so sweetly,  
And prays for ease in vain.

And I know that his heart is breaking,  
When, over those dear eyes,  
The darkness slowly gathers,  
And the loved and loving dies.

A grave is scooped on the hillside  
Where often, at eve or morn,  
He lays the blooms of the garden —  
He, and his youngest born. 120

And well I know that a brightness  
From his life has passed away,

And a smile from the green earth's beauty,  
And a glory from the day.

But I behold, above him,  
In the far blue deeps of air,  
Dim battlements shining faintly,  
And a throng of faces there;

See over crystal barrier  
The airy figures bend, <sup>130</sup>  
Like those who are watching and waiting  
The coming of a friend.

And one there is among them,  
With a star upon her brow,  
In her life a lovely woman,  
A sinless seraph now.

I know the sweet calm features;  
The peerless smile I know,  
And I stretch my arms with transport  
From where I stand below. <sup>140</sup>

And the quick tears drown my eyelids,  
But the airy figures fade,  
And the shining battlements darken  
And blend with the evening shade.

I am gazing into the twilight  
Where the dim-seen meadows lie,  
And the wind of night is swaying  
The trees with a heavy sigh.

1876 ?

1876.

### THE FLOOD OF YEARS

A MIGHTY Hand, from an exhaustless Urn,  
Pours forth the never-ending Flood of  
Years,  
Among the nations. How the rushing waves  
Bear all before them! On their foremost  
edge,  
And there alone, is Life. The Present there  
Tosses and foams, and fills the air with  
roar  
Of mingled noises. There are they who toil,  
And they who strive, and they who feast,  
and they  
Who hurry to and fro. The sturdy swain —  
Woodman and delver with the spade — is  
there, <sup>10</sup>  
And busy artisan beside his bench,  
And pallid student with his written roll.  
A moment on the mounting billow seen,

The flood sweeps over them and they are  
gone.

There groups of revellers whose brows are  
twined

With roses, ride the topmost swell awhile,  
And as they raise their flowing cups and  
touch

The clinking brim to brim, are whirled be-  
neath

The waves and disappear. I hear the jar  
Of beaten drums, and thunders that break  
forth <sup>20</sup>

From cannon, where the advancing billow  
sends

Up to the sight long files of armed men,  
That hurry to the charge through flame and  
smoke.

The torrent bears them under, whelmed and  
hid

Slayer and slain, in heaps of bloody foam.  
Down go the steed and rider, the plumed  
chief

Sinks with his followers; the head that  
wears

The imperial diadem goes down beside  
The felon's with cropped ear and branded  
cheek.

A funeral-train — the torrent sweeps away  
Bearers and bier and mourners. By the  
bed <sup>31</sup>

Of one who dies men gather sorrowing,  
And women weep aloud; the flood rolls  
on;

The wail is stifled and the sobbing group  
Borne under. Hark to that shrill, sudden  
shout,

The cry of an applauding multitude,  
Swayed by some loud-voiced orator who  
wields

The living mass as if he were its soul!  
The waters choke the shout and all is still.  
Lo! next a kneeling crowd, and one who  
spreads <sup>40</sup>

The hands in prayer — the engulfing wave  
o'ertakes

And swallows them and him. A sculptor  
wields

The chisel, and the stricken marble grows  
To beauty; at his easel, eager-eyed,  
A painter stands, and sunshine at his touch  
Gathers upon his canvas, and life glows;  
A poet, as he paces to and fro,  
Murmurs his sounding lines. Awhile they  
ride

The advancing billow, till its tossing crest

Strikes them and flings them under, while  
their tasks 50

Are yet unfinished. See a mother smile  
On her young babe that smiles to her again;  
The torrent wrests it from her arms; she  
shrieks

And weeps, and midst her tears is carried  
down.

A beam like that of moonlight turns the  
spray

To glistening pearls; two lovers, hand in  
hand,

Rise on the billowy swell and fondly look  
Into each other's eyes. The rushing flood  
Flings them apart: the youth goes down;  
the maid

With hands outstretched in vain, and  
streaming eyes, 60

Waits for the next high wave to follow  
him.

An aged man succeeds; his bending form  
Sinks slowly. Mingling with the sullen  
stream

Gleam the white locks, and then are seen  
no more.

Lo! wider grows the stream — a sea-like  
flood

Saps earth's walled cities; massive palaces  
Crumble before it; fortresses and towers  
Dissolve in the swift waters; populous  
realms

Swept by the torrent see their ancient  
tribes

Engulfed and lost; their very languages 70  
Stifled, and never to be uttered more.

I pause and turn my eyes, and looking  
back

Where that tumultuous flood has been, I  
see

The silent ocean of the Past, a waste  
Of waters weltering over graves, its shores  
Strewn with the wreck of fleets where  
mast and hull

Drop away piecemeal; battlemented walls  
Frown idly, green with moss, and temples  
stand

Unroofed, forsaken by the worshipper.  
There lie memorial stones, whence time  
has gnawed 80

The graven legends, thrones of kings o'er-  
turned,

The broken altars of forgotten gods,  
Foundations of old cities and long streets  
Where never fall of human foot is heard,  
On all the desolate pavement. I behold

Dim glimmerings of lost jewels, far within  
The sleeping waters, diamond, sardonyx,  
Ruby and topaz, pearl and chrysolite,  
Once glittering at the banquet on fair  
brows

That long ago were dust, and all around 90  
Strewn on the surface of that silent sea  
Are withering bridal wreaths, and glossy  
locks

Shorn from dear brows, by loving hands,  
and scrolls

O'erwritten, haply with fond words of love  
And vows of friendship, and fair pages  
flung

Fresh from the printer's engine. There  
they lie

A moment, and then sink away from sight.

I look, and the quick tears are in my  
eyes,

For I behold in every one of these  
A blighted hope, a separate history 100

Of human sorrows, telling of dear ties  
Suddenly broken, dreams of happiness

Dissolved in air, and happy days too brief  
That sorrowfully ended, and I think

How painfully must the poor heart have  
beat

In bosoms without number, as the blow  
Was struck that slew their hope and broke  
their peace.

Sadly I turn and look before, where yet  
The Flood must pass, and I behold a mist  
Where swarm dissolving forms, the brood  
of Hope, 110

Divinely fair, that rest on banks of flowers,  
Or wander among rainbows, fading soon

And reappearing, haply giving place  
To forms of grisly aspect such as Fear

Shapes from the idle air — where serpents  
lift

The head to strike, and skeletons stretch  
forth

The bony arm in menace. Further on  
A belt of darkness seems to bar the way,

Long, low, and distant, where the Life to  
come

Touches the Life that is. The Flood of  
Years 120

Rolls toward it near and nearer. It must  
pass

That dismal barrier. What is there be-  
yond?

Hear what the wise and good have said.  
Beyond

That belt of darkness, still the Years roll on

More gently, but with not less mighty  
sweep.

They gather up again and softly bear  
All the sweet lives that late were over-  
whelmed

And lost to sight, all that in them was good,  
Noble, and truly great, and worthy of  
love — <sup>129</sup>

The lives of infants and ingenuous youths,  
Sages and saintly women who have made  
Their households happy; all are raised and  
borne

By that great current in its onward sweep,  
Wandering and rippling with caressing  
waves

Around green islands with the breath  
Of flowers that never wither. So they pass  
From stage to stage along the shining  
course

Of that bright river, broadening like a sea  
As its smooth eddies curl along their way.

They bring old friends together; hands are  
clasped <sup>140</sup>

In joy unspeakable; the mother's arms  
Again are folded round the child she loved  
And lost. Old sorrows are forgotten now,  
Or but remembered to make sweet the  
hour

That overpays them; wounded hearts that  
bled

Or broke are healed forever. In the room  
Of this grief-shadowed present, there shall  
be

A Present in whose reign no grief shall  
gnaw

The heart, and never shall a tender tie  
Be broken; in whose reign the eternal  
Change <sup>150</sup>

That waits on growth and action shall pro-  
ceed

With everlasting Concord hand in hand.

1876.

1876.

# EDGAR ALLAN POE

## TAMERLANE<sup>1</sup>

KIND solace in a dying hour!<sup>2</sup>

Such, father, is not (now) my theme —<sup>3</sup>  
I will not madly deem that power

<sup>1</sup> 'Tamerlane,' which first appeared in 1827 in *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, was entirely re-written for Poe's volume of 1829, *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems*. The text of the poem as here given is practically that of 1829. It follows the edition of 1845 (as given in the Virginia and Stedman-Woodberry editions of Poe's works), but the differences of this edition from that of 1829 are confined (with one exception) to matters of punctuation and typography. The edition of 1831 offers somewhat greater variations, all of which are carefully recorded in the notes of both the Virginia and the Stedman-Woodberry editions. The version of 1827 is given complete in the notes to both these editions, and may also be found in Mr. R. H. Shepherd's complete reprint of the 1827 volume (London, 1884).

The subject of the poem, not very clear at first reading, is the evil triumph of ambition over love, illustrated in the career of the Mogul emperor Tamerlane, who, according to the story as conceived by Poe, was born a shepherd, left his mountain home and his early love for the conquest of the eastern world, and returned only to find that his love had died of his neglect.

The well-worn device of a death-bed narrative to the conventional friar is lamely excused by Poe in his first note to the 1827 edition: 'How I shall account for giving him "a friar" as a death-bed confessor, — I cannot exactly determine. He wanted some one to listen to his tale — and why not a friar? It does not pass the bounds of possibility, — quite sufficient for my purpose, — and I have at least good authority on my side for such innovations.'

<sup>2</sup> The beginning of the poem is somewhat clearer in the 1827 version: —

I have sent for thee, holy friar:  
But 't was not with the drunken hope,  
Which is but agony of desire  
To shun the fate, with which to cope  
Is more than crime may dare to dream,  
That I have call'd thee at this hour:  
Such, father, is not my theme —  
Nor am I mad, to deem that power  
Of earth may shrive me of the sin  
Unearthly pride hath revell'd in —  
I would not call thee fool, old man,  
But hope is not a gift of thine;  
If I can hope (O God! I can)  
It falls from an eternal shrine.

The gay wall of this gaudy tower  
Grows dim around me — death is near.  
I had not thought, until this hour  
When passing from the earth, that ear  
Of any, were it not the shade  
Of one whom in life I made  
All mystery but a simple name.  
Might know the secret of a spirit  
Bow'd down in sorrow, and in shame. —

<sup>3</sup> Poe's own somewhat peculiar punctuation is followed throughout, as given in the Virginia edition of Poe's Works. Faithfulness to this punctuation, about which Poe was particular, makes the Virginia edition, in text, superior to all others.

Of Earth may shrive me of the sin  
Unearthly pride hath revell'd in —  
I have no time to dote or dream:  
You call it hope — that fire of fire!  
It is but agony of desire:  
If I can hope — O God! I can —  
Its fount is holier — more divine — 10  
I would not call thee fool, old man,  
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit  
Bow'd from its wild pride into shame.  
O yearning heart! I did inherit  
Thy withering portion with the fame,  
The searing glory which hath shone  
Amid the Jewels of my throne,  
Halo of Hell! and with a pain  
Not Hell shall make me fear again — 20  
O craving heart, for the lost flowers  
And sunshine of my summer hours!  
The undying voice of that dead time,  
With its interminable chime,  
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,  
Upon thy emptiness — a knell.

I have not always been as now:  
The fever'd diadem on my brow  
I claim'd and won usurpingly —  
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given 30  
Rome to the Cæsar — this to me?  
The heritage of a kingly mind,  
And a proud spirit which hath striven  
Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life:  
The mists of the Taglay have shed<sup>4</sup>  
Nightly their dew upon my head,  
And, I believe, the wing'd strife  
And tumult of the headlong air  
Have nestled in my very hair. 40

So late from Heaven — that dew — it fell  
(Mid dreams of an unholy night)  
Upon me with the touch of Hell,

<sup>4</sup> The mountains of Belur Taglay are a branch of the Imaus, in the southern part of Independent Tartary. They are celebrated for the singular wildness and beauty of their valleys. (Poe, 1827.)



While the red flashing of the light  
 From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er,  
 Appeared to my half-closing eye  
 The pageantry of monarchy,  
 And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar  
 Came hurriedly upon me, telling  
 Of human battle, where my voice, 50  
 My own voice, silly child! — was swelling  
 (O! how my spirit would rejoice,  
 And leap within me at the cry)  
 The battle-cry of Victory!

The rain came down upon my head  
 Unshelter'd — and the heavy wind  
 Rendered me mad and deaf and blind.  
 It was but man, I thought, who shed  
 Laurels upon me: and the rush —  
 The torrent of the chilly air 60  
 Gurgled within my ear the crash  
 Of empires — with the captive's prayer —  
 The hum of suitors — and the tone  
 Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,  
 Usurp'd a tyranny which men  
 Have deem'd, since I have reach'd to power,  
 My innate nature — be it so:  
 But, father, there liv'd one who, then,  
 Then — in my boyhood — when their fire 70  
 Burn'd with a still intenser glow  
 (For passion must, with youth, expire)  
 E'en *then* who knew this iron heart  
 In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words — alas! — to tell  
 The loveliness of loving well!  
 Nor would I now attempt to trace  
 The more than beauty of a face  
 Whose lineaments, upon my mind,  
 Are — shadows on th' unstable wind: 80  
 Thus I remember having dwelt  
 Some page of early lore upon,  
 With loitering eye, till I have felt  
 The letters — with their meaning — melt  
 To fantasies — with none.

O, she was worthy of all love!  
 Love — as in infancy was mine —  
 'T was such as angel minds above  
 Might envy; her young heart the shrine  
 On which my every hope and thought 90  
 Were incense — then a goodly gift,  
 For they were childish and upright —  
 Pure — as her young example taught:

Why did I leave it, and, adrift,  
 Trust to the fire within, for light?

We grew in age — and love — together —  
 Roaming the forest, and the wild;  
 My breast her shield in wintry weather —  
 And, when the friendly sunshine smil'd,  
 And she would mark the opening skies, 100  
 I saw no Heaven — but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is — the heart:  
 For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,  
 When, from our little cares apart,  
 And laughing at her girlish wiles,  
 I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,  
 And pour my spirit out in tears —  
 There was no need to speak the rest —  
 No need to quiet any fears  
 Of her — who ask'd no reason why, 110  
 But turn'd on me her quiet eye!

Yet *more* than worthy of the love  
 My spirit struggled with, and strove,  
 When, on the mountain peak, alone,  
 Ambition lent it a new tone —  
 I had no being — but in thee:  
 The world, and all it did contain  
 In the earth — the air — the sea —  
 Its joy — its little lot of pain  
 That was new pleasure — the ideal, 120  
 Dim, vanities of dreams by night —  
 And dimmer nothings which were real —  
 (Shadows — and a more shadowy light!)  
 Parted upon their misty wings,  
 And, so, confusedly, became  
 Thine image and — a name — a name!  
 Two separate — yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious — have you known  
 The passion, father? You have not:  
 A cottager, I mark'd a throne 130  
 Of half the world as all my own,  
 And murmur'd at such lowly lot —  
 But, just like any other dream,  
 Upon the vapor of the dew  
 My own had past, did not the beam  
 Of beauty which did while it thro'  
 The minute — the hour — the day — op-  
 press  
 My mind with double loveliness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The last two paragraphs, twenty-seven lines in all, should be compared with the corresponding paragraphs (numbered vii and viii) in the version of 1827, which contain seventy-one lines, in order to appreciate the greater condensation and strength of the 1829 version. The advance which Poe made between these two



We walk'd together on the crown  
Of a high mountain which look'd down 140  
Afar from its proud natural towers  
Of rock and forest, on the hills —  
The dwindled hills ! begirt with bowers  
And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,  
But mystically — in such guise  
That she might deem it nought beside  
The moment's converse ; in her eyes  
I read, perhaps too carelessly —  
A mingled feeling with my own — 150  
The flush on her bright cheek, to me  
Seem'd to become a queenly throne  
Too well that I should let it be  
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then  
And donn'd a visionary crown —  
Yet it was not that Fantasy  
Had thrown her mantle over me —  
But that, among the rabble — men,  
Lion ambition is chain'd down — 160  
And crouches to a keeper's hand —  
Not so in deserts where the grand —  
The wild — the terrible conspire  
With their own breath to fan his fire.<sup>1</sup>

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand !<sup>2</sup> —  
Is she not queen of Earth ? her pride  
Above all cities ? in her hand  
Their destinies ? in all beside  
Of glory which the world hath known  
Stands she not nobly and alone ? 170  
Falling — her veriest stepping-stone  
Shall form the pedestal of a throne —  
And who her sovereign ? Timour<sup>3</sup> — he  
Whom the astonished people saw  
Striding o'er empires haughtily  
A diadem'd outlaw !

O, human love ! thou spirit given,  
On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven !  
Which fall'st into the soul like rain  
Upon the Siroc-wither'd plain, 180

versions, the way in which he 'found himself,' is strikingly illustrated by the characteristic suggestiveness, beauty, and perhaps vagueness of expression in these two paragraphs as they now stand.

<sup>1</sup> These ten lines have taken the place of ninety-three lines (sections xi-xiv) in the 1827 edition.

<sup>2</sup> I believe it was after the battle of Angora that Tamerlane made Samarcand his residence. It became for a time the seat of learning and the arts. (POM, 1827.)

<sup>3</sup> He was called Timur Bek as well as Tamerlane. (POM, 1827.)

And, failing in thy power to bless,  
But leav'st the heart a wilderness !  
Idea ! which bindest life around  
With music of so strange a sound  
And beauty of so wild a birth —  
Farewell ! for I have won the Earth.

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could  
see

No cliff beyond him in the sky,  
His pinions were bent droopingly —  
His pinions were bent droopingly —  
And homeward turn'd his soften'd eye.<sup>4</sup> 190  
'T was sunset: when the sun will part  
There comes a sullenness of heart  
To him who still would look upon  
The glory of the summer sun.  
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist  
So often lovely, and will list  
To the sound of the coming darkness  
(known

To those whose spirits barken) as one  
Who, in a dream of night, *would* fly  
But *cannot* from a danger nigh. 200

What tho' the moon — the white moon  
Shed all the splendor of her noon,  
Her smile is chilly — and her beam,  
In that time of dreariness, will seem  
(So like you gather in your breath)  
A portrait taken after death.

And boyhood is a summer sun  
Whose waning is the dreariest one —  
For all we live to know is known  
And all we seek to keep hath flown — 210  
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall  
With the noon-day beauty — which is all.

I reach'd my home — my home no more —  
For all had flown who made it so.  
I pass'd from out its mossy door,  
And, tho' my tread was soft and low,  
A voice came from the threshold stone  
Of one whom I had earlier known —  
O, I defy thee, Hell, to show  
On beds of fire that burn below, 220  
An humbler heart — a deeper woe.

<sup>4</sup> At this point the story is given more clearly in the version of 1827 : —

My eyes were still on pomp and power,  
My wilder'd heart was far away  
In the valleys of the wild Taglay,  
In mine own Ada's matted bower.  
I dwelt not long in Samarcand  
Ere, in a peasant's lowly guise,  
I sought my long-abandon'd land ;  
By sunset did its mountains rise  
In dusky grandeur to my eyes.

Father, I firmly do believe —<sup>1</sup>  
 I know — for Death who comes for me  
 From regions of the blest afar,  
 Where there is nothing to deceive,  
 Hath left his iron gate ajar,  
 And rays of truth you cannot see  
 Are flashing thro' Eternity —  
 I do believe that Eblis hath  
 A snare in every human path — 230  
 Else how, when in the holy grove  
 I wandered of the idol, Love,  
 Who daily scents his snowy wings  
 With incense of burnt offerings  
 From the most unpolluted things,  
 Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven  
 Above with trellis'd rays from Heaven  
 No mote may shun — no tiniest fly —  
 The light'ning of his eagle eye —  
 How was it that Ambition crept, 240  
 Unseen, amid the revels there,  
 Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt  
 In the tangles of Love's very hair?  
 1821?—1829.<sup>2</sup> 1827, 1827.

## TO — —

I SAW thee on thy bridal day —  
 When a burning blush came o'er thee,  
 Though happiness around thee lay,  
 The world all love before thee:

And in thine eye a kindling light  
 (Whatever it might be)  
 Was all on Earth my aching sight  
 Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame —  
 As such it well may pass —

<sup>1</sup> This last paragraph of the poem was added in the edition of 1829.

<sup>2</sup> In his preface to the original edition of *Tamerlane*, Poe says: 'The greater part of the poems which compose this little volume were written in the year 1821-1822, when the author had not completed his fourteenth year.' This statement is not to be trusted implicitly. But even if we assign the composition of these poems to the latest possible date, 1826-1827, the early development of their author seems hardly the less remarkable; for he would then be only seventeen or eighteen years old. Keats was almost twenty-two at the time when his first volume was published. 'Both in promise and in actual performance,' says Mr. Shepherd in his preface to the 1884 reprint of *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (quoted by Mr. Harrison), 'it may claim to rank as the most remarkable production that any English-speaking or English-writing poet of this century has published in his teens.' Poe was only eighteen years old when the volume was published, and it is interesting to note that the printer and publisher of the book, Calvin Thomas of Boston, was then only nineteen years old.

Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame  
 In the breast of him, alas!

Who saw thee on that bridal day,  
 When that deep blush *would* come o'er  
 thee,  
 Though happiness around thee lay,  
 The world all love before thee.  
 1826. 1827.

## SONG FROM AL AARAAF

'NEATH blue-bell or streamer —  
 Or tufted wild spray  
 That keeps, from the dreamer,  
 The moonbeam away —  
 Bright beings! that ponder,  
 With half closing eyes,  
 On the stars which your wonder  
 Hath drawn from the skies,  
 'Till they glance thro' the shade, and  
 Come down to your brow 10  
 Like — eyes of the maiden  
 Who calls on you now —  
 Arise! from your dreaming  
 In violet bowers,  
 To duty beseeching  
 These star-litten hours —  
 And shake from your tresses  
 Encumber'd with dew  
 The breath of those kisses  
 That cumber them too — 20

<sup>3</sup> This song was introduced in the second part of 'Al Aaraaf' as being sung to summon the spirit of music, or better the spirit of universal harmony. One of the most beautiful of Poe's tales, called 'Ligeia,' is an even finer embodiment of this conception.

Mr. Thomas Wentworth Higginson gives in his *Short Studies of American Authors* some vivid reminiscences of the evening when Poe read 'Al Aaraaf' to an audience in Boston. The story is told in more condensed form in Higginson and Boynton's *Reader's History of American Literature*, page 214: 'The verses had long since been printed in his youthful volume . . . and they produced no very distinct impression on the audience until Poe began to read the maiden's song in the second part. Already his tones had been softening to a finer melody than at first, and when he came to the verses, —

Ligeia! Ligeia!  
 My beautiful one!

his voice seemed attenuated to the faintest golden thread; the audience became hushed, and, as it were, breathless; there seemed no life in the hall but his; and every syllable was accentuated with such delicacy, and sustained with such sweetness, as I never heard equaled by other lips. When the lyric ended, it was like the ceasing of the gypsy's chant in Browning's "Flight of the Duchess;" and I remember nothing more, except that in walking back to Cambridge my comrades and I felt that we had been under the spell of some wizard. Indeed, I feel much the same in the retrospect, to this day.'

(O! how, without you, Love!  
 Could angels be blest?)  
 Those kisses of true love  
 That lull'd ye to rest!  
 Up! — shake from your wing  
 Each hindering thing:  
 The dew of the night —  
 It would weigh down your flight;  
 And true love caresses —  
 O! leave them apart!  
 They are light on the tresses,  
 But lead on the heart.

30

Ligeia! Ligeia!  
 My beautiful one!  
 Whose harshest idea  
 Will to melody run,  
 O! is it thy will  
 On the breezes to toss?  
 Or, capriciously still,  
 Like the lone Albatross,  
 Incumbent on night  
 (As she on the air)  
 To keep watch with delight  
 On the harmony there?

40

Ligeia! wherever  
 Thy image may be,  
 No magic shall sever  
 Thy music from thee.  
 Thou hast bound many eyes  
 In a dreamy sleep —  
 But the strains still arise  
 Which *thy* vigilance keep —  
 The sound of the rain  
 Which leaps down to the flower,  
 And dances again  
 In the rhythm of the shower —  
 The murmur that springs  
 From the growing of grass  
 Are the music of things —  
 But are modell'd, alas! —  
 Away, then my dearest,  
 O! hie thee away  
 To springs that lie clearest  
 Beneath the moon-ray —  
 To lone lake that smiles,  
 In its dream of deep rest,  
 At the many star-isles  
 That enjewel its breast —  
 Where wild flowers, creeping,  
 Have mingled their shade,  
 On its margin is sleeping  
 Full many a maid —  
 Some have left the cool glade, and

50

60

70

Have slept with the bee —  
 Arouse them my maiden,  
 On moorland and lea —  
 Go! breathe on their slumber,  
 All softly in ear,  
 The musical number  
 They slumber'd to hear —  
 For what can awaken  
 An angel so soon  
 Whose sleep hath been taken  
 Beneath the cold moon,  
 As the spell which no slumber  
 Of witchery may test,  
 The rhythmical number  
 Which lull'd him to rest?

80

1829?

1829.

### ROMANCE

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,  
 With drowsy head and folded wing,  
 Among the green leaves as they shake  
 Far down within some shadowy lake,  
 To me a painted paroquet  
 Hath been — a most familiar bird —  
 Taught me my alphabet to say —  
 To lisp my very earliest word  
 While in the wild wood I did lie,  
 A child — with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years  
 So shake the very Heaven on high  
 With tumult as they thunder by,  
 I have no time for idle cares  
 Through gazing on the unquiet sky.  
 And when an hour with calmer wings  
 Its down upon my spirit flings —  
 That little time with lyre and rhyme  
 To while away — forbidden things!  
 My heart would feel to be a crime  
 Unless it trembled with the strings.

1829.

### SONNET — TO SCIENCE

SCIENCE! true daughter of Old Time thou  
 art!  
 Who alterest all things with thy peering  
 eyes.  
 Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's  
 heart,  
 Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?  
 How should he love thee? or how deem  
 thee wise,

Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering  
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,  
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?  
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?  
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood  
To seek a shelter in some happier star?  
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,  
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me  
The summer dream beneath the tamarind  
tree?

1829.

## TO —

THE bowers whereat, in dreams, I see  
The wantonest singing birds,  
Are lips — and all thy melody  
Of lip-begotten words —

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined  
Then desolately fall,  
O God! on my funereal mind  
Like starlight on a pall —

Thy heart — *thy* heart! — I wake and sigh,  
And sleep to dream till day  
Of the truth that gold can never buy —  
Of the baubles that it may.

1829.

## TO —

I HEED not that my earthly lot  
Hath little of Earth in it,  
That years of love have been forgot  
In the hatred of a minute:  
I mourn not that the desolate  
Are happier, sweet, than I,  
But that you sorrow for my fate  
Who am a passer-by.

1829.

## A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

TAKE this kiss upon the brow!  
And, in parting from you now,  
Thus much let me avow —  
You are not wrong, who deem  
That my days have been a dream;  
Yet if hope has flown away  
In a night, or in a day,  
In a vision, or in none,  
Is it therefore the less *gone*?  
All that we see or seem  
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar  
Of a surf-tormented shore,  
And I hold within my hand  
Grains of the golden sand —  
How few! yet how they creep  
Through my fingers to the deep,  
While I weep — while I weep!  
O God! can I not grasp  
Them with a tighter clasp?  
O God! can I not save  
*One* from the pitiless wave?  
Is *all* that we see or seem  
But a dream within a dream?

1829, 1849.<sup>1</sup>

## TO HELEN

HELEN, thy beauty is to me  
Like those Nicéan barks of yore,  
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore  
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
To the glory that was Greece,  
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche  
How statue-like I see thee stand,  
The agate lamp within thy hand!  
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which  
Are Holy-Land!

1831.

ISRAFEL<sup>2</sup>

IN Heaven a spirit doth dwell  
'Whose heart-strings are a lute;'  
None sing so wildly well

<sup>1</sup> This poem suffered more changes than any other of Poe's. The germ of it is perhaps to be found in 'Imitation,' in the 1827 volume; but no phrase of that poem is identical with any phrase of this. 'To —', in the volume of 1829, contains one line taken from 'Imitation.' Part of 'To —' was used as a last paragraph of 'Tamerlane' in the edition of 1831; and the whole was later revised and considerably shortened, and was published by Griswold in 1849 with its present title.

<sup>2</sup> And the angel Israfil, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures. — KORAN. (Poe's note, 1845.)

Poe alone is responsible for the words 'Whose heart-strings are a lute.' The rest of the phrase had been quoted by Thomas Moore, in his 'Lalla Rookh,' from Sale's 'Preliminary Discourse' to the *Koran*. Poe, as Professor Woodberry has pointed out, took the phrase from Moore.

As the angel Israfil,  
And the giddy stars (so legends tell)  
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell  
Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above  
In her highest noon,  
The enamored moon  
Blushes with love,  
While, to listen, the red levin  
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,  
Which were seven,)  
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir  
And the other listening things)  
That Israfil's fire  
Is owing to that lyre  
By which he sits and sings —  
The trembling living wire  
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,  
Where deep thoughts are a duty —  
Where Love's a grown-up God —  
Where the Houri glances are  
Imbued with all the beauty  
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,  
Israfil, who despisest  
An unimpassioned song;  
To thee the laurels belong,  
Best bard, because the wisest!  
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above  
With thy burning measures suit —  
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,  
With the fervor of thy lute —  
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this  
Is a world of sweets and sour;  
Our flowers are merely — flowers,  
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss  
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell  
Where Israfil  
Hath dwelt, and he where I,  
He might not sing so wildly well  
A mortal melody,  
While a bolder note than this might swell  
From my lyre within the sky.

1831.

## THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne  
In a strange city lying alone  
Far down within the dim West,  
Where the good and the bad and the worst  
and the best  
Have gone to their eternal rest.  
There shrines and palaces and towers  
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)  
Resemble nothing that is ours.  
Around, by lifting winds forgot,  
Resignedly beneath the sky  
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down  
On the long night-time of that town;  
But light from out the lurid sea  
Streams up the turrets silently —  
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free —  
Up domes — up spires — up kingly halls —  
Up fanes — up Babylon-like walls —  
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers  
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers —  
Up many and many a marvellous shrine  
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine  
The viol, the violet, and the vine.  
Resignedly beneath the sky  
The melancholy waters lie.  
So blend the turrets and shadows there  
That all seem pendulous in air,  
While from a proud tower in the town  
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves  
Yawn level with the luminous waves  
But not the riches there that lie  
In each idol's diamond eye —  
Not the gayly-jewelled dead  
Tempt the waters from their bed;  
For no ripples curl, alas!  
Along that wilderness of glass —  
No swellings tell that winds may be  
Upon some far-off happier sea —  
No heavings hint that winds have been  
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!  
The wave — there is a movement there!  
As if the towers had thrust aside,  
In slightly sinking, the dull tide —  
As if their tops had feebly given  
A void within the filmy Heaven.  
The waves have now a redder glow —  
The hours are breathing faint and low —

And when, amid no earthly moans, 50  
Down, down that town shall settle hence,  
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,  
Shall do it reverence.

1831, 1845.

### THE SLEEPER<sup>1</sup>

At midnight, in the month of June,  
I stand beneath the mystic moon.  
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,  
Exhales from out her golden rim,  
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,  
Upon the quiet mountain top,  
Steals drowsily and musically  
Into the universal valley.  
The rosemary nods upon the grave;  
The lily lolls upon the wave; 10  
Wrapping the fog about its breast,  
The ruin moulders into rest;  
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake  
A conscious slumber seems to take,  
And would not, for the world, awake.  
All Beauty sleeps! — and lo! where lies  
Irene, with her Destinies!

Oh, lady bright! can it be right —  
This window open to the night?  
The wanton airs, from the tree-top, 20  
Laughingly through the lattice drop —  
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,  
Flit through thy chamber in and out,  
And wave the curtain canopy  
So fitfully — so fearfully —  
Above the closed and fringed lid  
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,  
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,  
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!  
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear? 30  
Why and what art thou dreaming here?  
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,  
A wonder to these garden trees!  
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!  
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,  
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,  
Which is enduring, so be deep!

<sup>1</sup> Poe says in a letter, probably of 1845: "Your appreciation of "The Sleeper" delights me. In the higher qualities of poetry it is better than "The Raven;" but there is not one man in a million who could be brought to agree with me in this opinion. "The Raven" of course, is far the better as a work of art; but in the true basis of all art, "The Sleeper" is the superior. I wrote the latter when quite a boy."

Heaven have her in its sacred keep!  
This chamber changed for one more holy,  
This bed for one more melancholy, 41  
I pray to God that she may lie  
Forever with unopened eye,  
While the pale sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,  
As it is lasting, so be deep!  
Soft may the worms about her creep!  
Far in the forest, dim and old,  
For her may some tall vault unfold —  
Some vault that oft hath flung its black 50  
And winged panels fluttering back,  
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,  
Of her grand family funerals —  
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,  
Against whose portal she hath thrown,  
In childhood, many an idle stone —  
Some tomb from out whose sounding door  
She ne'er shall force an echo more,  
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!  
It was the dead who groaned within. 60

1831.

### LENORE<sup>2</sup>

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit  
flown forever!

<sup>2</sup> The first and third stanzas are supposed to be spoken by the 'wretches,' relatives or false friends of Lenore; the second and fourth stanzas by Guy De Vere, her lover.

In this one case, perhaps, Poe's latest version is not so good as an earlier one. The form of Lenore published in 1843 is given below for comparison.

Ah, broken is the golden bowl!  
The spirit flown forever!  
Let the bell toll! — A saintly soul  
Glides down the Stygian river!  
And let the burial rite be read —  
The funeral song be sung —  
A dirge for the most lovely dead  
That ever died so young!  
And, Guy De Vere,  
Hast thou no tear?  
Weep now or nevermore!  
See, on yon drear  
And rigid bier,  
Low lies thy love Lenore!

'Yon heir, whose cheeks of pallid hue  
With tears are streaming wet,  
Sees only, through  
Their crocodile dew,

A vacant coronet —  
False friends! ye loved her for her wealth  
And hated her for her pride,  
And, when she fell in feeble health,  
Ye blessed her — that she died.  
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read?  
The requiem *how* be sung  
For her most wrong'd of all the dead  
That ever died so young?

*Peccavimus!*  
But rave not thus!  
And let the solemn song  
Go up to God so mournfully that she may feel no wrong!  
'The sweet Lenore  
Hath 'gone before'



Let the bell toll! — a saintly soul floats on  
the Stygian river;  
And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear? —  
weep now or never more!  
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies  
thy love, Lenore!  
Come! let the burial rite be read — the  
funeral song be sung! —  
An anthem for the queenliest dead that  
ever died so young —  
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she  
died so young.

'Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth  
and hated her for her pride,  
'And when she fell in feeble health, ye  
blessed her — that she died!  
'How *shall* the ritual, then, be read? —  
the requiem how be sung  
'By you — by yours, the evil eye, — by  
yours, the slanderous tongue

With young hope at her side,  
And thou art wild  
For the dear child  
That should have been thy bride —  
For her, the fair  
And debonair,  
That now so lowly lies —  
The life still there  
Upon her hair,  
The death upon her eyes.

'Avaunt! — to-night  
My heart is light —  
No dirge will I upraise,  
But waft the angel on her flight  
With a Pæan of old days!  
Let no bell toll!  
Lest her sweet soul,  
Amid its hallow'd mirth,  
Should catch the note  
As it doth float  
Up from the damned earth —  
To friends above, from fiends below,  
Th' indignant ghost is riven —  
From grief and moan  
To a gold throne  
Beside the King of Heaven!'

It seems probable that Poe was influenced by the success of 'The Raven' to rearrange 'Lenore' in somewhat similar lines of even length.

In the text above I have given the last stanza of the poem as it stands in the Lorimer Graham copy — a copy of the edition of 1845, corrected by Poe's own hand. In the edition of 1845, uncorrected, the stanza reads as follows: —

'Avaunt! — avaunt! from fiends below, the indignant ghost  
is riven —  
'From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven —  
'From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King  
of Heaven.'  
Let no bell toll then! — lest her soul, amid its hallowed mirth,  
Should catch the note as it doth float up from the damned  
Earth! —  
And I! — to-night my heart is light! No dirge will I up-  
raise  
But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days!

It is interesting to note that in this case, and perhaps in this case only, Poe, after changing considerably a passage of his work, later returned to a previous version. The arrangement of ideas in his *corrected* copy of this fourth stanza is much closer to the 1843 version than to that of 1845.

'That did to death the innocence that died,  
and died so young?'

*Peccavimus*; but rave not thus! and let a  
Sabbath song  
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may  
feel no wrong!  
The sweet Lenore hath 'gone before,' with  
Hope, that flew beside,  
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that  
should have been thy bride —  
For her, the fair and *debonair*, that now so  
lowly lies,  
The life upon her yellow hair but not within  
her eyes —  
The life still there, upon her hair — the  
death upon her eyes.

'Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No  
dirge will I upraise.  
'But waft the angel on her flight with a  
pæan of old days!  
'Let no bell toll! — lest her sweet soul,  
amid its hallowed mirth,  
'Should catch the note, as it doth float up  
from the damned Earth.  
'To friends above, from fiends below, the  
indignant ghost is riven —  
'From Hell unto a high estate far up  
within the Heaven —  
'From grief and groan, to a golden throne,  
beside the King of Heaven.'

1831, 1843, 1845.

## THE VALLEY OF UNREST

ONCE it smiled a silent dell  
Where the people did not dwell;  
They had gone unto the wars,  
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,  
Nightly, from their azure towers,  
To keep watch above the flowers,  
In the midst of which all day  
The red sun-light lazily lay.  
Now each visiter shall confess  
The sad valley's restlessness.  
Nothing there is motionless —  
Nothing save the airs that brood  
Over the magic solitude.  
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees  
That palpitate like the chill seas  
Around the misty Hebrides!  
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven  
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven

Uneasily, from morn till even,  
Over the violets there that lie  
In myriad types of the human eye —  
Over the lilies there that wave  
And weep above a nameless grave !  
They wave : — from out their fragrant tops  
Eternal dew comes down in drops.  
They weep : — from off their delicate stems  
Perennial tears descend in gems.

1831, 1845.

THE COLISEUM<sup>1</sup>

TYPE of the antique Rome ! Rich reliquary  
Of lofty contemplation left to Time  
By buried centuries of pomp and power !  
At length — at length — after so many  
days  
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,  
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee  
lie,)  
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,  
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within  
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and  
glory ! 9

Vastness ! and Age ! and Memories of Eld !  
Silence ! and Desolation ! and dim Night !  
I feel ye now — I feel ye in your strength —  
O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king  
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane !  
O charms more potent than the rapt  
Chaldee  
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars !

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls !  
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,  
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat !  
Here, where the dames of Rome their  
gilded hair 20  
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and  
thistle !  
Here, where on golden throne the monarch  
lolloped,  
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,  
Lit by the wan light of the hornèd moon,  
The swift and silent lizard of the stones !

But stay ! these walls — these ivy-clad  
arcades —  
These mouldering plinths — these sad and  
blackened shafts —

<sup>1</sup> Compare the descriptions of the Coliseum by Byron (*Manfred*, act. iii, scene iv, *Childe Harold*, canto iv, stanzas 114 and following), by Chateaubriand (*Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*), etc.

These vague entablatures — this crumbling  
frieze —

These shattered cornices — this wreck —  
this ruin —

These stones — alas ! these gray stones —  
are they all — 30

All of the famed, and the colossal left  
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me ?

'Not all' — the Echoes answer me — 'not  
all !

Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever  
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the  
wise,

As melody from Memnon to the Sun.  
We rule the hearts of mightiest men — we  
rule

With a despotic sway all giant minds.  
We are not impotent — we pallid stones.  
Not all our power is gone — not all our  
fame — 40

Not all the magic of our high renown —  
Not all the wonder that encircles us —  
Not all the mysteries that in us lie —  
Not all the memories that hang upon  
And cling around about us as a garment,  
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory.'

1833.

## HYMN

At morn — at noon — at twilight dim —  
Maria ! thou hast heard my hymn !  
In joy and woe — in good and ill —  
Mother of God, be with me still !  
When the Hours flew brightly by,  
And not a cloud obscured the sky,  
My soul, lest it should truant be,  
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee ;  
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast  
Darkly my Present and my Past,  
Let my Future radiant shine  
With sweet hopes of thee and thine !

1835.

TO ONE IN PARADISE<sup>2</sup>

THOU wast all that to me, love,  
For which my soul did pine —  
A green isle in the sea, love,  
A fountain and a shrine,

<sup>2</sup> Originally in the tale, 'The Visionary' (now called 'The Assignment'). There, and in most later versions, the first line reads, —

Thou wast that all to me, love . . .



All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,  
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last !  
Ah, starry Hope ! that didst arise  
But to be overcast !  
A voice from out the Future cries,  
'On ! on !' — but o'er the Past  
(Dim gulf ! ) my spirit hovering lies  
Mute, motionless, aghast !

For, alas ! alas ! with me  
The light of Life is o'er !  
'No more — no more — no more —'  
(Such language holds the solemn sea  
To the sands upon the shore)  
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,  
Or the stricken eagle soar !

And all my days are trances,  
And all my nightly dreams  
Are where thy gray eye glances,  
And where thy footstep gleams —  
In what ethereal dances,  
By what eternal streams.

1835.

TO F——<sup>1</sup>

BELOVED ! amid the earnest woes  
That crowd around my earthly path —  
(Drear path, alas ! where grows  
Not even one lonely rose) —  
My soul at least a solace hath  
In dreams of thee, and therein knows  
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus thy memory is to me  
Like some enchanted far-off isle  
In some tumultuous sea —  
Some ocean throbbing far and free  
With storms — but where meanwhile  
Serenest skies continually  
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

1835.

TO F——S S. O——D<sup>2</sup>

THOU wouldst be loved ? — then let thy  
heart  
From its present pathway part not !

<sup>1</sup> The title was in 1835 'To Mary,' in 1842 'To One Departed,' and in 1845 'To F——.'

<sup>2</sup> Addressed in 1845, with some changes from the version of 1835, to Frances Sargent Osgood. See the biographies.

Being everything which now thou art,  
Be nothing which thou art not.  
So with the world thy gentle ways,  
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,  
Shall be an endless theme of praise,  
And love — a simple duty.

1835, 1845.

## SONNET TO ZANTE

FAIR isle, that from the fairest of all  
flowers,  
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost  
take !<sup>3</sup>  
How many memories of what radiant hours  
At sight of thee and thine at once awake !  
How many scenes of what departed bliss !  
How many thoughts of what entombèd  
hopes !  
How many visions of a maiden that is  
No more — no more upon thy verdant  
slopes !  
No more ! alas, that magical sad sound  
Transforming all ! Thy charms shall  
please no more —  
Thy memory no more ! Accursèd ground  
Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled  
shore,  
O hyacinthine isle ! O purple Zante !  
'Isola d'oro ! Fior di Levante !'

1837.

THE HAUNTED PALACE<sup>4</sup>

IN the greenest of our valleys  
By good angels tenanted,  
Once a fair and stately palace —  
Radiant palace — reared its head.  
In the monarch Thought's dominion —  
It stood there !  
Never seraph spread a pinion  
Over fabric half so fair !

<sup>3</sup> Je souris à ses noms d'Isola d'oro, de Fior di Levante. Ce nom de fleur me rappelle que l'hyacinthe était originaire de l'île de Zante, et que cette île reçut son nom de la plante qu'elle avait portée. (CHATEAUBRIAND, *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*.)

<sup>4</sup> This poem is a part of Poe's tale of the 'Fall of the House of Usher,' which should be read entire. Lowell calls it 'one of the most beautiful of his poems,' and goes on: 'It loses greatly by being taken out of its rich and appropriate setting . . . We know no modern poet who might not have been justly proud of it. . . . Was ever the wreck and desolation of a noble mind so musically sung ?' 'By the "Haunted Palace" I mean to imply a mind haunted by phantoms — a disordered brain,' says Poe himself, in a letter in which he also accuses Longfellow of plagiarizing from this poem in the 'Beleaguered City.'

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,  
 On its roof did float and flow, 10  
 (This — all this — was in the olden  
 Time long ago,) ,  
 And every gentle air that dallied,  
 In that sweet day,  
 Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,  
 A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,  
 Through two luminous windows, saw  
 Spirits moving musically,  
 To a lute's well-tuned law, 20  
 Round about a throne where, sitting,  
 (PorphYROGENE !)  
 In state his glory well befitting,  
 The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing  
 Was the fair palace door,  
 Through which came flowing, flowing,  
 flowing  
 And sparkling evermore,  
 A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty  
 Was but to sing, 30  
 In voices of surpassing beauty,  
 The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,  
 Assailed the monarch's high estate.  
 (Ah, let us mourn ! — for never morrow  
 Shall dawn upon him desolate !)  
 And round about his home the glory  
 That blushed and bloomed,  
 Is but a dim-remembered story  
 Of the old time entombed. 40

And travellers, now, within that valley,  
 Through the red-litten windows see  
 Vast forms, that move fantastically  
 To a discordant melody,  
 While, like a ghastly rapid river,  
 Through the pale door  
 A hideous throng rush out forever  
 And laugh — but smile no more.

1839.

## SONNET — SILENCE

THERE are some qualities — some incorpo-  
 rate things,  
 That have a double life, which thus is made  
 A type of that twin entity which springs  
 From matter and light, evinced in solid and  
 shade.

There is a two-fold *Silence* — sea and  
 shore —  
 Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,  
 Newly with grass o'ergrown ; some solemn  
 graces,  
 Some human memories and tearful lore,  
 Render him terrorless: his name's 'No  
 More.'  
 He is the corporate Silence: dread him  
 not !  
 No power hath he of evil in himself;  
 But should some urgent fate (untimely  
 lot !)  
 Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless  
 elf,  
 That haunteth the lone regions where hath  
 trod  
 No foot of man,) commend thyself to God !  
 1840.

## THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo ! 't is a gala night  
 Within the lonesome latter years !  
 An angel throng, bewinged, bedight  
 In veils, and drowned in tears,  
 Sit in a theatre, to see  
 A play of hopes and fears,  
 While the orchestra breathes fitfully  
 The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,  
 Mutter and mumble low, 10  
 And hither and thither fly —  
 Mere puppets they, who come and go  
 At bidding of vast formless things  
 That shift the scenery to and fro,  
 Flapping from out their Condor wings  
 Invisible Woe !

That motley drama — oh, be sure  
 It shall not be forgot !  
 With its Phantom chased for evermore,  
 By a crowd that seize it not, 20  
 Through a circle that ever returneth in  
 To the self-same spot,  
 And much of Madness, and more of Sin,  
 And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout  
 A crawling shape intrude !  
 A blood-red thing that writhes from out  
 The scenic solitude !  
 It writhes ! — it writhes ! — with mortal  
 pangs

The mimes become its food, 30  
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs  
In human gore imbued.

Out — out are the lights — out all !  
And, over each quivering form,  
The curtain, a funeral pall,  
Comes down with the rush of a storm,  
While the angels, all pallid and wan,  
Uprising, unveiling, affirm  
That the play is the tragedy, 'Man,' 40  
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.  
1843.

### DREAM-LAND

By a route obscure and lonely,  
Haunted by ill angels only,  
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,  
On a black throne reigns upright,  
I have reached these lands but newly  
From an ultimate dim Thule —  
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sub-  
lime,  
Out of SPACE — out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,  
And chasms, and caves and Titan woods,  
With forms that no man can discover 11  
For the tears that drip all over;  
Mountains toppling evermore  
Into seas without a shore;  
Seas that restlessly aspire,  
Surging, unto skies of fire;  
Lakes that endlessly outspread  
Their lone waters — lone and dead, —  
Their still waters — still and chilly  
With the snows of the lolling lily. 20

By the lakes that thus outspread  
Their lone waters, lone and dead, —  
Their sad waters, sad and chilly  
With the snows of the lolling lily, —  
By the mountains — near the river  
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever, —  
By the gray woods, — by the swamp  
Where the toad and the newt encamp, —  
By the dismal tarns and pools  
Where dwell the Ghouls, — 30  
By each spot the most unholy —  
In each nook most melancholy, —  
There the traveller meets, aghast,  
Sheeted Memories of the Past —  
Shrouded forms that start and sigh  
As they pass the wanderer by —

White-robed forms of friends long given,  
In agony, to the Earth — and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion  
'T is a peaceful, soothing region — 40  
For the spirit that walks in shadow  
'T is — oh 't is an Eldorado !  
But the traveller, travelling through it,  
May not — dare not openly view it;  
Never its mysteries are exposed  
To the weak human eye unclosed;  
So wills its King, who hath forbid  
The uplifting of the fringed lid;  
And thus the sad Soul that here passes  
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely, 51  
Haunted by ill angels only,  
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,  
On a black throne reigns upright,  
I have wandered home but newly  
From this ultimate dim Thule.  
1844.

### THE RAVEN<sup>1</sup>

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pon-  
dered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of  
forgotten lore —

<sup>1</sup> In connection with the 'Raven' Poe's 'Philosophy of Composition' must be read. See also: Ingram (John H.), *The Raven*, London, 1885. Benton (Joel), *In the Poe Circle*. Kent (Charles W.), 'Poe and Chivers' (in the Virginia Edition of Poe's Works, vol. vii, pp. 266-288). Woodberry (G. E.), 'The Poe-Chivers Papers' (in the *Century*, January and February, 1903). Newcomer (A. G.), 'The Poe-Chivers Tradition re-examined' (in the *Sewanee Review*, January, 1904.) Stedman (E. C.), *The Raven*, illustrated by Doré, with comment by E. C. Stedman.

Whether or not Poe in the 'Raven' owed anything to Chivers, he unquestionably, as Mr. Stedman has pointed out, owed less to Chivers than to Mrs. Browning. With the beginning of Poe's third stanza,

'And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain,'

compare Mrs. Browning's fourth stanza in the 'Conclusion' of *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*,

'With a murmurous stir uncertain, in the air the purple curtain  
Swelleth in and swelleth out around her motionless pale  
brow,

While the gliding of the river sends a rippling noise for ever  
Through the open casement whitened by the moonlight's  
slant repose.'

Here, if we use the method adopted by Poe in his arraignment of Longfellow and his attack on Longfellow's defenders, where he insists that rhythm, metre, and stanza must form an essential part of any comparison, and that the probability of imitation is in direct ratio to the brevity of the passages compared as well as to the number of coincidences, it would be easy to show that Poe has followed, or as he would say plagiarized

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly  
there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at  
my chamber door.

from, Mrs. Browning. The rhythm is the same, trochaic; the metre is the same, octameter; the first four lines of the stanza which Poe uses throughout the 'Raven' are exactly identical with Mrs. Browning's stanza, the first and third lines having internal feminine rhyme at the fourth foot, and the second and fourth having single masculine rhymes. The only difference is that Poe has added another internal rhyme in the fourth line. He has then added a fifth line (always in part a repetition of the fourth and ending with the same word or words), and the refrain. Again to adopt Poe's method of comparison, one might note that in the first line of Poe's third stanza and of Mrs. Browning's fourth, the same word, 'curtain' occupies the same, and the most prominent, place, that it is matched in each case with the same rhyme-word, 'uncertain,' that the curtain is in each case a purple curtain, and in each case a vaguely waving curtain, and that in each case it produces a murmuring or rustling sound—and finally, that all these coincidences occur within the compass of one line, and are as numerous and peculiar as those which Poe insists upon, in what he calls the brief compass of eight or sixteen lines, in his article against Longfellow and Aldrich (see the *Longfellow War* in the Virginia Edition of Poe's *Works*, vol. xii, pp. 41-106, especially pp. 76-82). Other minute resemblances might be pointed out, such as the mention in both poems of the lattice-window; but this would be less profitable than to recognize the essential originality of Poe's conception and expression. He was a frank admirer of Mrs. Browning's poetry, and dedicated his chief volume, the *Raven and Other Poems*, to her: 'To the Noblest of her Sex—to the Author of "The Drama of Exile"—to Miss Elizabeth Barrett of England—I dedicate this volume, with the most enthusiastic admiration and with the most sincere esteem.' It is to be noted also that Mrs. Browning was more fond than any other English poet of the refrain. On Poe's use of the refrain, and also of the repetend, on which point he may be best compared with Coleridge, see C. A. Smith's *Repetition and Parallelism in English Verse*, J. P. Fruit's *The Mind and Art of Poe's Poetry*, etc.

However much of the 'Raven' may have been suggested by Poe's predecessors, it suggested even more to his followers. The most important instance of this (not forgetting his influence on Baudelaire and Mallarmé) is perhaps to be found in its having suggested to Rossetti 'The Blessed Damsel.' See W. M. Rossetti's *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters, etc.*, 1896, vol. i, p. 107: "'The Blessed Damsel' was written with a view to its insertion in a manuscript family magazine, of brief vitality. In 1881 Rossetti gave Mr. Calne an account of its origin, as deriving from his perusal and admiration of Edgar Poe's "Raven." "I saw" (this is Mr. Calne's version of Rossetti's statement) "that Poe had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and I determined to reverse the condition, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven." Along with "The Raven" and other poems by Poe, "Ulalume," "For Annie," "The Haunted Palace," and many another were a deep well of delight to Rossetti in all these years. He once wrote a parody of "Ulalume." I do not rightly remember it, nor has it left a vestige behind.'

On the time and place of composition of the 'Raven,' see the long note in the Stedman-Woodberry edition of the *Poems*, pages 156-9, and the authorities there cited; the last pages of chapter ix in Harrison's *Life of Poe*; and Ingram's *The Raven*, referred to above.

'T is some visiter,' I muttered, 'tapping  
at my chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more.'

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the  
bleak December;  
And each separate dying ember wrought  
its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I  
had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow  
for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the  
angels name Lenore—  
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of  
each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic ter-  
rors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart,  
I stood repeating  
'T is some visiter•entreating entrance at  
my chamber door—  
Some late visiter entreating entrance at my  
chamber door;—  
This it is and nothing more.'

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitat-  
ing then no longer,  
'Sir,' said I, 'or Madam, truly your for-  
giveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently  
you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at  
my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you'—here  
I opened wide the door;  
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I  
stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever  
dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the still-  
ness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the  
whispered word, 'Lenore!'  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured  
back the word 'Lenore!'  
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul  
within me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat  
louder than before.

'Surely,' said I, 'surely that is something  
at my window lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this  
mystery explore —  
Let my heart be still a moment and this  
mystery explore; —  
'Tis the wind and nothing more !'

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with  
many a flirt and flutter  
In there stepped a stately Raven of the  
saintly days of yore.  
Not the least obeisance made he; not a min-  
ute stopped or stayed he;  
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched  
above my chamber door — 40  
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above  
my chamber door —  
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy  
into smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the  
countenance it wore,  
'Though thy crest be shorn and shaven,  
thou,' I said, 'art sure no craven,  
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering  
from the Nightly shore —  
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the  
Night's Plutonian shore !'  
Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to  
hear discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning — little  
relevancy bore; 50  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living  
human being  
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above  
his chamber door —  
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above  
his chamber door,  
With such name as 'Nevermore.'

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid  
bust, spoke only  
That one word, as if his soul in that one  
word he did outpour.  
Nothing farther then he uttered — not a  
feather then he fluttered —  
Till I scarcely more than muttered 'Other  
friends have flown before —  
On the morrow he will leave me, as my  
hopes have flown before.'  
Then the bird said 'Nevermore.' 60

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so  
aptly spoken,  
'Doubtless,' said I, 'what it utters is its  
only stock and store  
Caught from some unhappy master whom  
unmerciful Disaster  
Followed fast and followed faster till his  
songs one burden bore —  
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy  
burden bore  
Of "Never — nevermore."'

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy  
into smiling,  
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front  
of bird, and bust and door;  
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook  
myself to linking  
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this omi-  
nous bird of yore — 70  
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt,  
and ominous bird of yore  
Meant in croaking 'Nevermore.'

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syl-  
lable expressing  
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned  
into my bosom's core;  
This and more I sat divining, with my head  
at ease reclining  
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-  
light gloated o'er,  
But whose velvet violet lining with the  
lamp-light gloating o'er,  
She shall press, ah, nevermore !

Then, methought, the air grew denser, per-  
fumed from an unseen censer  
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled  
on the tufted floor. 80  
'Wretch,' I cried, 'thy God hath lent  
thee — by these angels he hath sent  
thee  
Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy  
memories of Lenore;  
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and for-  
get this lost Lenore !'  
Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.'

'Prophet !' said I, 'thing of evil ! prophet  
still, if bird or devil ! —  
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest  
tossed thee here, ashore,  
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert  
land enchanted —

On this home by Horror haunted — tell me  
truly, I implore —

Is there — is there balm in Gilead? — tell  
me — tell me, I implore!

Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.' 90

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil! —  
prophet still, if bird or devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us — by  
that God we both adore —

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within  
the distant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the  
angels name Lenore —

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the  
angels name Lenore.'

Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.'

'Be that word our sign of parting, bird or  
fiend!' I shrieked, upstarting —

'Get thee back into the tempest and the  
Night's Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie  
thy soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken! — quit the  
bust above my door! 100

Take thy beak from out my heart, and  
take thy form from off my door!

Quoth the Raven 'Nevermore.'

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting,  
*still is sitting*

On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my  
chamber door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a de-  
mon's that is dreaming,

And the lamp-light o'er him streaming  
throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies  
floating on the floor

Shall be lifted — nevermore!<sup>1</sup>

1842-44?

1845.

### EULALIE — A SONG

I DWELT alone

In a world of moan,

And my soul was a stagnant tide,

Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my  
blushing bride —

Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie be-  
came my smiling bride.

<sup>1</sup> In the concluding stanza . . . I convert him [the raven] into an allegorical emblem or personification of Mournful Remembrance, out of the Shadow of which the poet is 'lifted nevermore.' (Poe, *Works*, vol. xii, p. 75.)

Ah, less — less bright<sup>2</sup>  
The stars of the night  
Than the eyes of the radiant girl!

And never a flake

That the vapor can make

With the moon-tints of purple and  
pearl,

Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most un-  
regarded curl —

Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's  
most humble and careless curl.

Now Doubt — now Pain

Come never again,

For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,  
And all day long

Shines, bright and strong,

Astarte within the sky,

While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her  
matron eye —

While ever to her young Eulalie upturns  
her violet eye.

1845.

### ULALUME<sup>2</sup>

THE skies they were ashen and sober;

The leaves they were crisped and sere —

The leaves they were withering and sere;

It was night in the lonesome October

Of my most immemorial year;

It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,

In the misty mid region of Weir —

It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,

In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic, 10

Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul —

Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.

These were days when my heart was vol-  
canic

As the scoriac rivers that roll —

As the lavas that restlessly roll

Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek

In the ultimate climes of the pole —

That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek

In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober, 20

But our thoughts they were palsied and  
sere —

Our memories were treacherous and  
sere —

<sup>2</sup> Poe's child-wife Virginia died in January of 1847, and this poem was published in December. See the biographical sketch.



For we knew not the month was October,  
And we marked not the night of the  
year —

(Ah, night of all nights in the year !)  
We noted not the dim lake of Auber —  
(Though once we had journeyed down  
here) —

Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,  
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent 30  
And star-dials pointed to morn —  
As the star-dials hinted of morn —  
At the end of our path a liquescent  
And nebulous lustre was born,  
Out of which a miraculous crescent  
Arose with a duplicate horn —  
Astarte's bediamonded crescent  
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said — 'She is warmer than Dian :  
She rolls through an ether of sighs — 40  
She revels in a region of sighs :  
She has seen that the tears are not dry on  
These cheeks, where the worm never  
dies

And has come past the stars of the Lion  
To point us the path to the skies —  
To the Lethean peace of the skies —  
Come up, in despite of the Lion,  
To shine on us with her bright eyes —  
Come up through the lair of the Lion,  
With love in her luminous eyes.' 50

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,  
Said — 'Sadly this star I mistrust —  
Her pallor I strangely mistrust : —  
Oh, hasten ! — oh, let us not linger !  
Oh, fly ! — let us fly ! — for we must.'  
In terror she spoke, letting sink her  
Wings until they trailed in the dust —  
In agony sobbed, letting sink her  
Plumes till they trailed in the dust —  
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the  
dust. 60

I replied — 'This is nothing but dreaming :  
Let us on by this tremulous light !  
Let us bathe in this crystalline light !  
Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming  
With Hope and in Beauty to-night : —  
See ! — it flickers up the sky through  
the night !  
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,  
And be sure it will lead us aright —

We safely may trust to a gleaming  
That cannot but guide us aright, 70  
Since it flickers up to Heaven through  
the night.'

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,  
And tempted her out of her gloom —  
And conquered her scruples and gloom ;  
And we passed to the end of the vista,  
But were stopped by the door of a tomb —  
By the door of a legended tomb ;  
And I said — 'What is written, sweet  
sister,  
On the door of this legended tomb ?'  
She replied — 'Ulalume — Ulalume —  
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume !' 81

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober  
As the leaves that were crisped and  
sere —  
As the leaves that were withering and  
sere,  
And I cried — 'It was surely October  
On *this* very night of last year  
That I journeyed — I journeyed down  
here —  
That I brought a dread burden down  
here —  
On this night of all nights in the year,  
Ah, what demon has tempted me here ? 90  
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber —  
This misty mid region of Weir —  
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,  
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.'

1847.

### TO HELEN<sup>1</sup>

I SAW thee once — once only — years ago:  
I must not say *how* many — but *not* many.  
It was a July midnight; and from out  
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own  
soul, soaring,  
Sought a precipitate pathway up through  
heaven,

<sup>1</sup> The occasion of Poe's first sight of Mrs. Whitman is romantically described as follows : —

'Poe caught a glimpse of a white figure wandering in a moonlit garden in Providence, on his way from Boston, when he visited that city to deliver a poem before the Lyceum there. Restless, near midnight, he wandered from his hotel near where she lived, until he saw her walking in a garden. He related the incident afterwards in one of his most exquisite poems, worthy of himself, of her, and of the most exalted passion.' (Harrison's *Life of Poe*, p. 284.) See also Mrs. Whitman's *Poems*, and Woodberry's *Life of Poe*, pp. 308-325.

There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,  
With quietude and sultriness and slumber,  
Upon the upturn'd faces of a thousand  
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,  
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tip-  
toe —

Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses  
That gave out, in return for the love-light,  
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death —  
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses  
That smiled and died in this parterre, en-  
chanted  
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank  
I saw thee half reclining; while the moon  
Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,  
And on thine own, upturn'd — alas, in sor-  
row!

Was it not Fate, that, on this July mid-  
night —  
Was it not Fate, (whose name is also Sor-  
row),  
That bade me pause before that garden-  
gate,  
To breathe the incense of those slumbering  
roses?  
No footstep stirred: the hated world all  
slept,  
Save only thee and me. (Oh, heaven! —  
oh, God!  
How my heart beats in coupling those two  
words!)  
Save only thee and me. I paused — I  
looked —  
And in an instant all things disappeared.  
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was en-  
chanted!)

The pearly lustre of the moon went out:  
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,  
The happy flowers and the repining trees,  
Were seen no more: the very roses' odors  
Died in the arms of the adoring airs.  
All — all expired save thee — save less  
than thou:

Save only the divine light in thine eyes —  
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.  
I saw but them — they were the world to  
me.

I saw but them — saw only them for  
hours —

Saw only them until the moon went down.  
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie en-  
written

Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres!  
How dark a woe! yet how sublime a hope!  
How silently serene a sea of pride!  
How daring an ambition! yet how deep —  
How fathomless a capacity for love!

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from  
sight,  
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud;  
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing  
trees

Didst glide away. *Only thine eyes remained.*  
They would not go — they never yet have  
gone.

Lighting my lonely pathway home that  
night,  
They have not left me (as my hopes have)  
since.

They follow me — they lead me through  
the years

They are my ministers — yet I their slave.  
Their office is to illumine and enkindle —  
My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light,  
And purified in their electric fire,  
And sanctified in their elysian fire.

They fill my soul with Beauty (which is  
Hope),

And are far up in Heaven — the stars I  
kneel to

In the sad, silent watches of my night;  
While even in the meridian glare of day  
I see them still — two sweetly scintillant  
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun!

1848.

1848.

## 'THE BELLS'

### I

HEAR the sledges with the bells —  
Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody  
foretells!

<sup>1</sup> It was shortly after this, during the summer, that Poe wrote the first rough draft of 'The Bells,' at Mrs. Shew's residence. 'One day he came in,' she records, 'and said, "Marie Louise, I have to write a poem; I have no feeling, no sentiment, no inspiration."' His hostess persuaded him to have some tea. It was served in the conservatory, the windows of which were open, and admitted the sound of neighboring church bells. Mrs. Shew said, playfully, 'Here is paper;' but the poet, declining it, declared, 'I so dislike the noise of bells to-night, I cannot write. I have no subject — I am exhausted.' The lady then took up the pen, and, pretending to mimic his style, wrote, 'The Bells, by E. A. Poe;' and then in pure sportiveness, 'The Bells, the little silver Bells,' Poe finishing off the stanza. She then suggested for the next verse, 'The heavy iron



How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,  
 In the icy air of night !  
 While the stars that oversprinkle  
 All the heavens, seem to twinkle  
 With a crystalline delight;  
 Keeping time, time, time,  
 In a sort of Runic rhyme, 10  
 To the tintinnabulation that so musically  
 wells  
 From the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
 Bells, bells, bells —  
 From the jingling and the tinkling of the  
 bells.

## II

Hear the mellow wedding bells —  
 Golden bells !  
 What a world of happiness their harmony  
 foretells !  
 Through the balmy air of night  
 How they ring out their delight ! —  
 From the molten-golden notes, 20  
 And all in tune,  
 What a liquid ditty floats  
 To the turtle-dove that listens, while she  
 gloats

Bells;' and this Poe also expanded into a stanza. He next copied out the complete poem, and headed it, 'By Mrs. M. L. Shew,' remarking that it was her poem, as she had suggested and composed so much of it. (INGRAM, *Life of Poe*.)

Such was the beginning of the poem; its development is described by the editor of *Sartain's Union Magazine*, a month after it was first published: 'This poem came into our possession about a year since. It then consisted of *eighteen lines*! They were as follows:

## THE BELLS — A SONG

The bells! — hear the bells !  
 The merry wedding-bells !  
 The little silver bells !  
 How fairy-like a melody there swells  
 From the silver tinkling cells  
 Of the bells, bells, bells !  
 Of the bells !  
 The bells ! — ah, the bells !  
 The heavy iron bells !  
 Hear the tolling of the bells !  
 Hear the knells !  
 How horrible a monody there floats  
 From their throats —  
 From their deep-toned throats !  
 How I shudder at the notes  
 From the melancholy throats  
 Of the bells, bells, bells !  
 Of the bells !

'About six months after this we received the poem enlarged and altered nearly to its present size and form; and about three months since, the author sent another alteration and enlargement, in which condition the poem was left at the time of his death.'

Professor Woodberry suggests that Poe probably had the idea of his poem in mind for some time before Mrs. Shew induced him to begin writing it, and remarks on 'his frequent reference to the magical sound of bells throughout his literary life.' (*Life of Poe*, pp. 302-304.) He also quotes a striking parallel passage from Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*.

On the moon !  
 Oh, from out the sounding cells,  
 What a gush of euphony voluminously  
 wells !  
 How it swells !  
 How it dwells  
 On the Future! — how it tells  
 Of the rapture that impels 30  
 To the swinging and the ringing  
 Of the bells, bells, bells —  
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
 Bells, bells, bells —  
 To the rhyming and the chiming of the  
 bells !

## III

Hear the loud alarum bells —  
 Brazen bells !  
 What a tale of terror, now their turbulency  
 tells !  
 In the startled ear of night  
 How they scream out their affright ! 40  
 Too much horrified to speak,  
 They can only shriek, shriek,  
 Out of tune,  
 In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of  
 the fire,  
 In a mad expostulation with the deaf and  
 frantic fire,  
 Leaping higher, higher, higher,  
 With a desperate desire,  
 And a resolute endeavor  
 Now — now to sit, or never,  
 By the side of the pale-faced moon. 50  
 Oh, the bells, bells, bells !  
 What a tale their terror tells  
 Of Despair !  
 How they clang, and clash, and roar!  
 What a horror they outpour  
 On the bosom of the palpitating air!  
 Yet the ear, it fully knows,  
 By the twanging,  
 And the clanging,  
 How the danger ebbs and flows; 60  
 Yet the ear distinctly tells,  
 In the jangling,  
 And the wrangling,  
 How the danger sinks and swells,  
 By the sinking or the swelling in the anger  
 of the bells —  
 Of the bells —  
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
 Bells, bells, bells —  
 In the clamor and the clanging of the  
 bells !

## IV

Hear the tolling of the bells — 70  
 Iron bells!  
 What a world of solemn thought their  
 monody compels!  
 In the silence of the night,  
 How we shiver with affright  
 At the melancholy menace of their tone!  
 For every sound that floats  
 From the rust within their throats  
 Is a groan.  
 And the people — ah, the people —  
 They that dwell up in the steeple, 80  
 All alone,  
 And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,  
 In that muffled monotone,  
 Feel a glory in so rolling  
 On the human heart a stone —  
 They are neither man nor woman —  
 They are neither brute nor human —  
 They are Ghouls: —  
 And their king it is who tolls: —  
 And he rolls, rolls, rolls, 90  
 Rolls  
 A pæan from the bells!  
 And his merry bosom swells  
 With the pæan of the bells!  
 And he dances, and he yells;  
 Keeping time, time, time,  
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,  
 To the pæan of the bells: —  
 Of the bells:  
 Keeping time, time, time 100  
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,  
 To the throbbing of the bells —  
 Of the bells, bells, bells —  
 To the sobbing of the bells: —  
 Keeping time, time, time,  
 As he knells, knells, knells,  
 In a happy Runic rhyme,  
 To the rolling of the bells —  
 Of the bells, bells, bells: —  
 To the tolling of the bells — 110  
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
 Bells, bells, bells —  
 To the moaning and the groaning of the  
 bells.  
 1843-49. 1849.

TO MY MOTHER<sup>1</sup>

BECAUSE I feel that, in the Heavens above,  
 The angels, whispering to one another,

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Clemm, Virginia's mother. See the biographical sketch.

Can find, among their burning terms of  
 love,  
 None so devotional as that of 'Mother,'  
 Therefore by that dear name I long have  
 called you —  
 You who are more than mother unto me,  
 And fill my heart of hearts, where Death  
 installed you,  
 In setting my Virginia's spirit free.  
 My mother — my own mother, who died  
 early,  
 Was but the mother of myself; but you  
 Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,  
 And thus are dearer than the mother I  
 knew  
 By that infinity with which my wife  
 Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.  
 1849.

FOR ANNIE<sup>2</sup>

THANK Heaven! the crisis —  
 The danger is past,  
 And the lingering illness  
 Is over at last —  
 And the fever called 'Living'  
 Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know  
 I am shorn of my strength,  
 And no muscle I move  
 As I lie at full length — 10  
 But no matter! — I feel  
 I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly  
 Now, in my bed,  
 That any beholder  
 Might fancy me dead —  
 Might start at beholding me,  
 Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,  
 The sighing and sobbing, 20  
 Are quieted now,  
 With that horrible throbbing  
 At heart: — ah that horrible,  
 Horrible throbbing!

<sup>2</sup> See Harrison's *Life of Poe*, pp. 301, 302; and chapters xi and xii of the *Letters*, especially pp. 342-344, the letter of March 23, 1849, quoted also in Ingram's *Life of Poe*. In this letter was enclosed the poem, of which Poe says: 'I think the lines "For Annie" much the best I have ever written.'

The last two lines of the first stanza were suggested by Longfellow as an inscription for the monument tardily erected over Poe's grave in 1875.

The sickness — the nausea —  
 The pitiless pain —  
 Have ceased with the fever  
 That maddened my brain —  
 With the fever called 'Living'  
 That burned in my brain.

30

And oh ! of all tortures  
*That* torture the worst  
 Has abated — the terrible  
 Torture of thirst  
 For the naphthaline river  
 Of Passion accurst : —  
 I have drank of a water  
 That quenches all thirst : —

Of a water that flows,  
 With a lullaby sound,  
 From a spring but a very few  
 Feet under ground —  
 From a cavern not very far  
 Down under ground.

40

And ah ! let it never  
 Be foolishly said  
 That my room it is gloomy  
 And narrow my bed ;  
 For a man never slept  
 In a different bed —  
 And, to sleep, you must slumber  
 In just such a bed.

50

My tantalized spirit  
 Here blandly reposes,  
 Forgetting, or never  
 Regretting, its roses —  
 Its old agitations  
 Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly  
 Lying, it fancies  
 A holier odor  
 About it, of pansies —  
 A rosemary odor,  
 Commingled with pansies —  
 With rue and the beautiful  
 Puritan pansies.

60

And so it lies happily,  
 Bathing in many  
 A dream of the truth  
 And the beauty of Annie —  
 Drowned in a bath  
 Of the tresses of Annie.

70

She tenderly kissed me,  
 She fondly caressed,  
 And then I fell gently  
 To sleep on her breast —  
 Deeply to sleep  
 From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,  
 She covered me warm,  
 And she prayed to the angels  
 To keep me from harm —  
 To the queen of the angels  
 To shield me from harm.

80

And I lie so composedly,  
 Now, in my bed,  
 (Knowing her love)  
 That you fancy me dead —  
 And I rest so contentedly,  
 Now, in my bed,  
 (With her love at my breast)  
 That you fancy me dead —  
 That you shudder to look at me,  
 Thinking me dead : —

90

But my heart it is brighter  
 Than all of the many  
 Stars of the sky,  
 For it sparkles with Annie —  
 It glows with the light  
 Of the love of my Annie —  
 With the thought of the light  
 Of the eyes of my Annie.

100

1849.

## ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,  
 In a kingdom by the sea  
 That a maiden there lived whom you may  
 know  
 By the name of ANNABEL LEE;  
 And this maiden she lived with no other  
 thought  
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 But we loved with a love that was more  
 than love —  
 I and my ANNABEL LEE —  
 With a love that the wingèd seraphs of  
 heaven  
 Coveted her and me.

110

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling  
 My beautiful ANNABEL LEE;  
 So that her high-born kinsmen came  
 And bore her away from me,  
 To shut her up in a sepulchre  
 In this kingdom by the sea. 20

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,  
 Went envying her and me —  
 Yes! — that was the reason (as all men  
 know,  
 In this kingdom by the sea)  
 That the wind came out of the cloud by  
 night,  
 Chilling and killing my ANNABEL LEE.

But our love it was stronger by far than  
 the love  
 Of those who were older than we —  
 Of many far wiser than we —  
 And neither the angels in heaven above, 30  
 Nor the demons down under the sea,  
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE :

For the moon never beams, without bring-  
 ing me dreams  
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE,  
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the  
 bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE :  
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by  
 the side

Of my darling — my darling — my life and  
 my bride,  
 In the sepulchre there by the sea — 40  
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.  
 1849. 1849.

## ELDORADO

GAILY bedight,  
 A gallant knight,  
 In sunshine and in shadow,  
 Had journeyed long,  
 Singing a song,  
 In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old —  
 This knight so bold —  
 And o'er his heart a shadow  
 Fell as he found  
 No spot of ground  
 That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
 Failed him at length,  
 He met a pilgrim shadow —  
 'Shadow,' said he,  
 'Where can it be —  
 This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains  
 Of the Moon,  
 Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
 Ride, boldly ride,'  
 The shade replied, —  
 'If you seek for Eldorado.'

1850.

# RALPH WALDO EMERSON

## GOOD-BYE <sup>1</sup>

GOOD-BYE, proud world ! I'm going home:  
Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.  
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;  
A river-ark on the ocean brine,  
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;  
But now, proud world ! I'm going home.

Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face;  
To Grandeur with his wise grimace;  
To upstart Wealth's averted eye;  
To supple Office, low and high; 10  
To crowded halls, to court and street;  
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;  
To those who go, and those who come;  
Good-bye, proud world ! I'm going home.

I am going to my own hearth-stone,  
Bosomed in yon green hills alone, —  
A secret nook in a pleasant land,  
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;  
Where arches green, the livelong day,  
Echo the blackbird's roundelay, 20  
And vulgar feet have never trod  
A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,  
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;  
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,  
Where the evening star so holy shines,  
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,  
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;  
For what are they all, in their high conceit,  
When man in the bush with God may meet?  
1823. 1839.

<sup>1</sup> In sending these verses to Rev. James Freeman Clarke, in 1839, Emerson said: 'They were written sixteen years ago, when I kept school in Boston, and lived in a corner of Roxbury called Canterbury. They have a slight misanthropy, a shade deeper than belongs to me. . . .'

This 'corner of Roxbury' is now a part of Franklin Park. It is called 'Schoolmaster's Hill,' and one of its rocks bears the inscription: 'Near this rock, A. D. 1823-1825, was the house of Schoolmaster Ralph Waldo Emerson. Here some of his earlier poems were written; among them that from which the following lines are taken. . . .' There follows the last stanza of this poem.

## THOUGHT

I AM not poor, but I am proud,  
Of one inalienable right,  
Above the envy of the crowd, —  
Thought's holy light.

Better it is than gems or gold,  
And oh ! it cannot die,  
But thought will glow when the sun  
grows cold,  
And mix with Deity.

1823.

1904.

## THE RIVER <sup>2</sup>

AND I behold once more  
My old familiar haunts; here the blue river,  
The same blue wonder that my infant eye  
Admired, sage doubting whence the travel-  
ler came, —

Whence brought his sunny bubbles ere he  
washed

The fragrant flag-roots in my father's fields,  
And where thereafter in the world he went.  
Look, here he is, unaltered, save that now  
He hath broke his banks and flooded all  
the vales 10

With his redundant waves.  
Here is the rock where, yet a simple child,  
I caught with bended pin my earliest fish,  
Much triumphing, — and these the fields  
Over whose flowers I chased the butterfly,  
A blooming hunter of a fairy fine.  
And hark ! where overhead the ancient  
crows

Hold their sour conversation in the sky: —  
These are the same, but I am not the same,  
But wiser than I was, and wise enough 19  
Not to regret the changes, tho' they cost  
Me many a sigh. Oh, call not nature dumb;

<sup>2</sup> This poem should be compared with Wordsworth's 'Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree,' both because the two poems are similar in thought and mood, and because each marks the same point of development in its author's thought and powers of expression. This was written when Emerson was twenty-four years old, and Wordsworth's when he was twenty-five.

These trees and stones are audible to me,  
These idle flowers, that tremble in the wind,  
I understand their faery syllables,  
And all their sad significance. The wind,  
That rustles down the well-known forest  
road —

It hath a sound more eloquent than speech.  
The stream, the trees, the grass, the sighing  
wind,

All of them utter sounds of 'monishment  
And grave parental love. 30

They are not of our race, they seem to say,  
And yet have knowledge of our moral  
race,

And somewhat of majestic sympathy,  
Something of pity for the puny clay,  
That holds and boasts the immeasurable  
mind.

I feel as I were welcome to these trees  
After long months of weary wandering,  
Acknowledged by their hospitable boughs;  
They know me as their son, for side by  
side,

They were coeval with my ancestors, 40  
Adorned with them my country's primitive  
times,

And soon may give my dust their funeral  
shade.

1827.

1904.

## LINES TO ELLEN

TELL me, maiden, dost thou use  
Thyself thro' Nature to diffuse?  
All the angles of the coast  
Were tenanted by thy sweet ghost,  
Bore thy colors every flower,  
Thine each leaf and berry bore;  
All wore thy badges and thy favors  
In their scent or in their saviors,  
Every moth with painted wing,  
Every bird in carolling,  
The wood-boughs with thy manners waved,  
The rocks uphold thy name engraved,  
The sod throbbed friendly to my feet,  
And the sweet air with thee was sweet.  
The saffron cloud that floated warm  
Studied thy motion, took thy form,  
And in his airy road benign  
Recalled thy skill in bold design,  
Or seemed to use his privilege  
To gaze o'er the horizon's edge,  
To search where now thy beauty glowed,  
Or made what other purlieus proud.

1829.

1904.

## TO ELLEN AT THE SOUTH

THE green grass is bowing,  
The morning wind is in it;  
'T is a tune worth thy knowing,  
Though it change every minute.

'T is a tune of the Spring;  
Every year plays it over  
To the robin on the wing,  
And to the pausing lover.

O'er ten thousand, thousand acres,  
Goes light the nimble zephyr; 10  
The Flowers — tiny sect of Shakers —  
Worship him ever.

Hark to the winning sound!  
They summon thee, dearest, —  
Saying, 'We have dressed for thee the  
ground,  
Nor yet thou appearest.

'O hasten; 't is our time,  
Ere yet the red Summer  
Scorch our delicate prime,  
Loved of bee, — the tawny hummer. 20

'O pride of thy race!  
Sad, in sooth, it were to ours,  
If our brief tribe miss thy face,  
We poor New England flowers.

'Fairest, choose the fairest members  
Of our lithe society;  
June's glories and September's  
Show our love and piety.

'Thou shalt command us all, —  
April's cowslip, summer's clover,  
To the gentian in the fall, 30  
Blue-eyed pet of blue-eyed lover.

'O come, then, quickly come!  
We are budding, we are blowing;  
And the wind that we perfume  
Sings a tune that's worth the knowing.'

1829.

1843.

## TO ELLEN

AND Ellen, when the graybeard years  
Have brought us to life's evening hour,  
And all the crowded Past appears  
A tiny scene of sun and shower,

Then, if I read the page aright  
 Where Hope, the soothsayer, reads our  
 lot,  
 Thyself shalt own the page was bright,  
 Well that we loved, woe had we not,

When Mirth is dumb and Flattery's fled,  
 And mute thy music's dearest tone,  
 When all but Love itself is dead  
 And all but deathless Reason gone.

1829.

1904.

### THINE EYES STILL SHINED

THINE eyes still shined for me, though far  
 I lonely roved the land or sea:  
 As I behold yon evening star,  
 Which yet beholds not me.

This morn I climbed the misty hill  
 And roamed the pastures through;  
 How danced thy form before my path  
 Amidst the deep-eyed dew!

When the redbird spread his sable wing,  
 And showed his side of flame;  
 When the rosebud ripened to the rose,  
 In both I read thy name.

1829 or 1830.

1846.<sup>1</sup>

### WRITTEN IN NAPLES<sup>2</sup>

WE are what we are made; each following  
 day  
 Is the Creator of our human mould

<sup>1</sup> The first collected edition of Emerson's *Poems*, which bears the date 1847, and is listed under that year in the bibliographies, actually appeared in 1846.

<sup>2</sup> Remember the Sunday morning in Naples when I said, 'This moment is the truest vision, the best spectacle I have seen amid all the wonders; and this moment, this vision, I might have had in my own closet in Boston.' (Emerson's *Journal*, 1834.)

Compare the essay on 'Self-Reliance': —

'Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.'

Compare also 'The Day's Ration,' and Whittier's 'The Last Walk in Autumn.'

(The illustrative passages from Emerson's *Journal* given in these notes, and many of the parallel passages from Emerson's essays, are quoted by Mr. E. W. Emerson in his exceedingly valuable notes to the 'Centenary Edition' of the *Poems*, or in his *Emerson in Concord*.)

Not less than was the first; the all-wise God  
 Gilds a few points in every several life,  
 And as each flower upon the fresh hillside,  
 And every colored petal of each flower,  
 Is sketched and dyed, each with a new design,

Its spot of purple, and its streak of brown,  
 So each man's life shall have its proper lights,

And a few joys, a few peculiar charms,  
 For him round-in the melancholy hours  
 And reconcile him to the common days.

Not many men see beauty in the fogs  
 Of close low pine-woods in a river town;  
 Yet unto me not morn's magnificence,  
 Nor the red rainbow of a summer eve,  
 Nor Rome, nor joyful Paris, nor the halls  
 Of rich men blazing hospitable light,  
 Nor wit, nor eloquence, — no, nor even the song

Of any woman that is now alive, —  
 Hath such a soul, such divine influence,  
 Such resurrection of the happy past,  
 As is to me when I behold the morn  
 Ope in such low moist roadside, and beneath  
 Peep the blue violets out of the black loam,

Pathetic silent poets that sing to me  
 Thine elegy, sweet singer, sainted wife.<sup>3</sup>

1833.

1883.

### WRITTEN AT ROME<sup>4</sup>

ALONE in Rome. Why, Rome is lonely  
 too; —

Besides, you need not be alone; the soul  
 Shall have society of its own rank.  
 Be great, be true, and all the Scipios,  
 The Catos, the wise patriots of Rome,  
 Shall flock to you and tarry by your side,  
 And comfort you with their high company.  
 Virtue alone is sweet society,  
 It keeps the key to all heroic hearts,  
 And opens you a welcome in them all.  
 You must be like them if you desire them,  
 Scorn trifles and embrace a better aim  
 Than wine or sleep or praise;  
 Hunt knowledge as the lover wooes a maid,

<sup>3</sup> Emerson's first wife, the 'Ellen' of the previous poems, died of consumption after they had been married only a year and a half.

<sup>4</sup> Don't you see you are the Universe to yourself? You carry your fortunes in your own hand. Change of place won't mend the matter. You will weave the same web at Pernambuco as at Boston, if you have only learned how to make one texture. (*Journal*, Divinity Hall, Cambridge, November, 1827.)



And ever in the strife of your own thoughts  
Obey the nobler impulse; that is Rome:  
That shall command a senate to your side;  
For there is no might in the universe  
That can contend with love. It reigns for-  
ever.

Wait then, sad friend, wait in majestic peace  
The hour of heaven. Generously trust  
Thy fortune's web to the beneficent hand  
That until now has put his world in fee  
To thee. He watches for thee still. His  
love

Broods over thee, and as God lives in heaven,  
However long thou walkest solitary,  
The hour of heaven shall come, the man ap-  
pear.

1833.

1883.

WEBSTER<sup>1</sup>

ILL fits the abstemious Muse a crown to  
weave

For living brows; ill fits them to receive:  
And yet, if virtue abrogate the law,  
One portrait — fact or fancy — we may  
draw;

A form which Nature cast in the heroic  
mould

Of them who rescued liberty of old;  
He, when the rising storm of party roared,  
Brought his great forehead to the council  
board,

There, while hot heads perplexed with fears  
the state,

Calm as the morn the manly patriot sate;  
Seemed, when at last his clarion accents  
broke,

As if the conscience of the country spoke.  
Not on its base Monadnoc surer stood,  
Than he to common sense and common  
good:

No mimic; from his breast his counsel  
drew,

Believed the eloquent was aye the true;

<sup>1</sup> The only passage from the Phi Beta Kappa poem of 1834 which has been preserved in Emerson's Works. After Webster's death he wrote (1854), with unintentional injustice, —

Why did all manly gifts in Webster fail?  
He wrote on Nature's grandest brow, *For Sale*.

Compare Whittier's arraignment of Webster in 'Ichabod,' and his partial retraction in 'The Lost Occasion.' Most of the New England abolitionists, many of whom, so long as the party of slavery was in power, were quite willing to disrupt the Union rather than to submit to its pro-slavery laws, could never forgive or at all understand Webster's position in setting the Union above all else, even abolition.

He bridged the gulf from th' alway good  
and wise

To that within the vision of small eyes.  
Self-centred; when he launched the genuine  
word

It shook or captivated all who heard,  
Ran from his mouth to mountains and the  
sea,

And burned in noble hearts proverb and  
prophecy.

1834.

1883.

## THE RHODORA:

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE  
FLOWER?

IN May, when sea-winds pierced our soli-  
tudes,

I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,  
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp  
nook,

To please the desert and the sluggish brook.  
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,  
Made the black water with their beauty  
gay;

Here might the redbird come his plumes  
to cool,

And court the flower that cheapens his ar-  
ray.

Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why  
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,  
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for  
seeing,

Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:<sup>2</sup>  
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!  
I never thought to ask, I never knew:  
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose  
The self-same Power that brought me there  
brought you.

1834.

1839.

## EACH AND ALL

LITTLE thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked  
clown

Of thee from the hill-top looking down;  
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,

<sup>2</sup> Compare the chapter on Beauty, in Emerson's 'Nature': 'This element [Beauty] I call an ultimate end. No reason can be asked or given why the soul seeks beauty. Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe. . . . The ancient Greeks called the world κόσμος, Beauty.'

Compare also the 'Michael Angelo': 'Beauty cannot be defined. Like Truth, it is an ultimate aim of the human being.'



Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;  
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,  
Deems not that great Napoleon  
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,  
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine  
height;<sup>1</sup>

Nor knowest thou what argument  
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent. 10  
All are needed by each one;  
Nothing is fair or good alone.

I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,  
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;  
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;  
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,  
For I did not bring home the river and sky; —  
He sang to my ear, — they sang to my  
eye.

The delicate shells lay on the shore;  
The bubbles of the latest wave 20  
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,  
And the bellowing of the savage sea  
Greeted their safe escape to me.  
I wiped away the weeds and foam,  
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;  
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things  
Had left their beauty on the shore  
With the sun and the sand and the wild up-  
roar.<sup>2</sup>

The lover watched his graceful maid,  
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed, 30  
Nor knew her beauty's best attire  
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.  
At last she came to his hermitage,  
Like the bird from the woodlands to the  
cage; —

The gay enchantment was undone,  
A gentle wife, but fairy none.  
Then I said, 'I covet truth;  
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;  
I leave it behind with the games of  
youth: ' —

As I spoke, beneath my feet 40  
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,  
Running over the club-moss burrs;

<sup>1</sup> Buonaparte was sensible to the music of bells. Hearing the bell of a parish church, he would pause, and his voice faltered as he said, 'Ah! that reminds me of the first years I spent at Brienne; I was then happy.' (*Journal*, 1844.)

<sup>2</sup> I remember when I was a boy going upon the beach and being charmed with the colors and forms of the shells. I picked up many and put them in my pocket. When I got home I could find nothing that I gathered — nothing but some dry, ugly mussel and small shells. Thence I learned that Composition was more important than the beauty of individual forms to Effect. On the shore they lay wet and social, by the sea and under the sky. (*Journal*, May 16, 1834.)

I inhaled the violet's breath;  
Around me stood the oaks and firs;  
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;  
Over me soared the eternal sky,  
Full of light and of deity;  
Again I saw, again I heard,  
The rolling river, the morning bird; —  
Beauty through my senses stole; 50  
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

1834 ?

1839.

### THE APOLOGY<sup>3</sup>

THINK me not unkind and rude  
That I walk alone in grove and glen;  
I go to the god of the wood  
To fetch his word to men.

Tax not my sloth that I  
Fold my arms beside the brook;  
Each cloud that floated in the sky  
Writes a letter in my book.

Chide me not, laborious band,  
For the idle flowers I brought;  
Every aster in my hand  
Goes home loaded with a thought.

There was never mystery  
But 't is figured in the flowers;  
Was never secret history  
But birds tell it in the bowers.

One harvest from thy field  
Homeward brought the oxen strong;  
A second crop thine acres yield,  
Which I gather in a song.<sup>4</sup>

1834 ?

1846.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Wordsworth's 'Expostulation and Reply,' and 'The Tables Turned.'

Compare also a passage in Emerson's description of Thoreau, as reported by Charles J. Woodbury: —

'Men of note would come to talk with him.  
'"I don't know," he would say; "perhaps a minute would be enough for both of us."

'"But I come to walk with you when you take your exercise."

'"Ah, walking — that is my holy time."' (WOODBURY'S *Talks with Emerson*, p. 80.)

<sup>4</sup> Compare the beautiful lines in Emerson's poem, 'The Dirge,' 1838: —

Knows he who tills this lonely field  
To reap its scanty corn,  
What mystic fruit his acres yield  
At midnight and at morn ?

In the long sunny afternoon  
The plain was full of ghosts;  
I wandered up, I wandered down,  
Beset by pensive hosts.

CONCORD HYMN<sup>1</sup>

SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BATTLE MONUMENT, JULY 4, 1837

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;  
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;  
And Time the ruined bridge has swept  
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,  
We set to-day a votive stone;  
That memory may their deed redeem,  
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare  
To die, and leave their children free,  
Bid Time and Nature gently spare  
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

1837.

1837.

THE HUMBLE-BEE<sup>2</sup>

BURLY, dozing humble-bee,  
Where thou art is clime for me.  
Let them sail for Porto Rique,  
Far-off heats through seas to seek;  
I will follow thee alone,  
Thou animated torrid-zone!

<sup>1</sup> Compare Emerson's 'Historical Discourse at Concord, September 12, 1835,' and his 'Address at the Hundredth Anniversary of the Concord Fight,' especially a passage in the first of these addresses, describing the battle and its motives: 'These poor farmers who came up, that day, to defend their native soil, acted from the simplest instincts. They did not know it was a deed of fame they were doing,' etc.

The first quatrain of the poem is now inscribed on the Battle Monument at Concord.

Emerson's grandfather, William Emerson, was minister at Concord in 1775; in his pulpit he strongly advocated resistance to the British, and when the day of the fight came, he was among the 'embattled farmers.' The fight took place near his own house, later known as 'The old Manse,' and the home successively of Emerson and of Hawthorne. (See Bartlett's *Concord, Historic and Literary*.) 'Let us stand our ground,' he said to the minutemen; 'if we die, let us die here.'

<sup>2</sup> Containing much of the quintessence of poetry. (LONGFELLOW.)

Yesterday in the woods I followed the fine humble-bee with rhymes and fancies fine. . . . The humble-bee and pine-warbler seem to me the proper objects of attention in these disastrous times. (*Journal*, 1837.)

Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,  
Let me chase thy waving lines;  
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,  
Singing over shrubs and vines.

20

Insect lover of the sun,  
Joy of thy dominion!  
Sailor of the atmosphere;  
Swimmer through the waves of air;  
Voyager of light and noon;  
Epicurean of June;  
Wait, I prithee, till I come  
Within earshot of thy hum, —  
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days, 20  
With a net of shining haze  
Silvers the horizon wall,  
And with softness touching all,  
Tints the human countenance  
With a color of romance,  
And infusing subtle heats,  
Turns the sod to violets,  
Thou, in sunny solitudes,  
Rover of the underwoods,  
The green silence dost displace 30  
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,  
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone  
Tells of countless sunny hours,  
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;  
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound  
In Indian wildernesses found;  
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,  
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean 40  
Hath my insect never seen;  
But violets and bilberry bells,  
Maple-sap and daffodels,  
Grass with green flag half-mast high,  
Succory to match the sky,  
Columbine with horn of honey,  
Scented fern, and agrimony,  
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue  
And brier-roses, dwelt among;  
All beside was unknown waste, 50  
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,  
Yellow-breeched philosopher!  
Seeing only what is fair,  
Sipping only what is sweet,  
Thou dost mock at fate and care,

Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.  
 When the fierce northwestern blast  
 Cools sea and land so far and fast,  
 Thou already slumberest deep; 60  
 Woe and want thou canst outsleep;  
 Want and woe, which torture us,  
 Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

1837 ?

1839.

URIEL<sup>1</sup>

It fell in the ancient periods  
 Which the brooding soul surveys,  
 Or ever the wild Time coined itself  
 Into calendar months and days.

This was the lapse of Uriel  
 Which in Paradise befell.  
 Once, among the Pleiads walking,  
 Seyd overheard the young gods talking;  
 And the treason, too long pent,  
 To his ears was evident. 10  
 The young deities discussed  
 Laws of form, and metre just,  
 Orb, quintessence, and sunbeams,  
 What subsisteth and what seems.  
 One, with low tones that decide,  
 And doubt and reverend use defied,  
 With a look that solved the sphere,  
 And stirred the devils everywhere,  
 Gave his sentiment divine  
 Against the being of a line. 20  
 'Line in nature is not found;  
 Unit and universe are round;  
 In vain produced, all rays return;  
 Evil will bless, and ice will burn.'  
 As Uriel spoke with piercing eye,  
 A shudder ran around the sky;  
 The stern old war-gods shook their heads,  
 The seraphs frowned from myrtle-beds;

<sup>1</sup> From its strange presentation in a celestial parable of the story of a crisis in its author's life, this poem demands especial comment. In his essay on 'Circles' — which sheds light upon it — Emerson said, 'Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet.'

The earnest young men on the eve of entering the ministry asked him to speak to them. After serious thought he went to Cambridge (July 15, 1838) to give them the good and emancipating words which had been given to him in solitude, well aware, however, that he must shock or pain the older clergy who were present. The poem, when read with the history of the Divinity School Address, and its consequences, in mind, is seen to be an account of that event generalized and sublimed, — the announcement of an advance in truth, won not without pain and struggle, to hearers not yet ready, resulting in banishment to the prophet; yet the spoken word sticks like a barbed arrow, or works like a leaven. (E. W. EMERSON.)

Seemed to the holy festival  
 The rash word boded ill to all; 30  
 The balance-beam of Fate was bent;  
 The bounds of good and ill were rent;  
 Strong Hades could not keep his own,  
 But all slid to confusion.

A sad self-knowledge, withering, fell  
 On the beauty of Uriel;  
 In heaven once eminent, the god  
 Withdrew, that hour, into his cloud;  
 Whether doomed to long gyration  
 In the sea of generation, 40  
 Or by knowledge grown too bright  
 To hit the nerve of feebler sight.  
 Straightway, a forgetting wind  
 Stole over the celestial kind,  
 And their lips the secret kept,  
 If in ashes the fire-seed slept.  
 But now and then, truth-speaking things  
 Shamed the angels' veiling wings;  
 And, shrilling from the solar course,  
 Or from fruit of chemic force, 50  
 Procession of a soul in matter,  
 Or the speeding change of water,  
 Or out of the good of evil born,  
 Came Uriel's voice of cherub scorn,  
 And a blush tinged the upper sky,  
 And the gods shook, they knew not why.  
 1838. 1846.

THE PROBLEM<sup>2</sup>

I LIKE a church; I like a cowl;  
 I love a prophet of the soul;  
 And on my heart monastic aisles  
 Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles;  
 Yet not for all his faith can see  
 Would I that cowl'd churchman be.

Why should the vest on him allure,  
 Which I could not on me endure ?

Not from a vain or shallow thought<sup>3</sup>  
 His awful Jove young Phidias brought;  
 Never from lips of cunning fell 11  
 The thrilling Delphic oracle;

<sup>2</sup> It is very grateful to my feelings to go into a Roman Cathedral, yet I look as my countrymen do at the Roman priesthood. It is very grateful to me to go into an English Church and hear the liturgy read, yet nothing would induce me to be the English priest. (*Journal*, August 28, 1838.)

<sup>3</sup> Compare the essay on 'Compensation:' 'This voice of fable has in it something divine. It came from thought above the will of the writer. . . . Phidias it is not,' etc.

Out from the heart of nature rolled  
 The burdens of the Bible old;  
 The litanies of nations came,  
 Like the volcano's tongue of flame,  
 Up from the burning core below, —  
 The canticles of love and woe:  
 The hand that rounded Peter's dome <sup>1</sup>  
 And groined the aisles of Christian Rome  
 Wrought in a sad sincerity: <sup>2</sup> 21  
 Himself from God he could not free; <sup>3</sup>  
 He builded better than he knew; — <sup>4</sup>  
 The conscious stone to beauty grew.  
 Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's  
 nest

Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?  
 Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,  
 Painting with morn her annual cell?  
 Or how the sacred pine-tree adds  
 To her old leaves new myriads? 30  
 Such and so grew these holy piles,  
 Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.  
 Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,  
 As the best gem upon her zone,  
 And Morning opes with haste her lids  
 To gaze upon the Pyramids;  
 O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,  
 As on its friends, with kindred eye;  
 For out of Thought's interior sphere  
 These wonders rose to upper air; <sup>5</sup> 40  
 And Nature gladly gave them place,  
 Adopted them into her race,  
 And granted them an equal date  
 With Andes and with Ararat. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Emerson's essay on 'Michael Angelo;' and the quotation from his 'Poetry and Imagination,' in note 7 in the next column.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Emerson's essay on 'Art:' 'The Iliad of Homer, the songs of David, the odes of Pindar, the tragedies of Aeschylus, the Doric temples, the Gothic cathedrals, the plays of Shakespeare, all and each were made not for sport, but in grave earnest, in tears and smiles of suffering and loving men.'

<sup>3</sup> Compare the essay on 'Art:' 'The Gothic cathedrals were built when the builder and the priest and the people were overpowered by their faith. Love and fear laid every stone.' Compare also line 32 of the poem: —

Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the essay on 'Art:' 'Our arts are happy bits. We are like the musician on the lake, whose melody is sweeter than he knows.'

<sup>5</sup> It is in the soul that architecture exists, and Santa Croce and the Duomo are poor, far-behind imitations. (*Journal*, Florence, 1833.)

<sup>6</sup> Compare the essay on 'Art:' 'And so every genuine work of art has as much reason for being as the earth and the sun. . . . We feel in seeing a noble building which rhymes well, as we do in hearing a perfect song, that it is spiritually organic; that it had a necessity in nature for being; was one of the possible forms in the Divine mind, and is now only discovered and executed by the artist, not arbitrarily composed by him.'

These temples grew as grows the grass;  
 Art might obey, but not surpass.  
 The passive Master lent his hand  
 To the vast soul that o'er him planned; <sup>7</sup>  
 And the same power that reared the  
 shrine

Bestrode the tribes that knelt within. 50  
 Ever the fiery Pentecost  
 Girds with one flame the countless host,  
 Trances the heart through chanting choirs,  
 And through the priest the mind in-  
 spires.

The word unto the prophet spoken  
 Was writ on tables yet unbroken;  
 The word by seers or sibyls told,  
 In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,  
 Still floats upon the morning wind,  
 Still whispers to the willing mind. 60

One accent of the Holy Ghost  
 The heedless world hath never lost.  
 I know what say the fathers wise,  
 The Book itself before me lies,  
 Old *Chrysostom*, best Augustine,  
 And he who blent both in his line,  
 The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,  
 Taylor, the Shakspeare of divines.  
 His words are music in my ear,  
 I see his cowl'd portrait dear; 70  
 And yet, for all his faith could see,  
 I would not the good bishop be.

1839.

1840.

### WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF GOETHE <sup>8</sup>

Six thankful weeks, — and let it be  
 A meter of prosperity, —  
 In my coat I bore this book,  
 And seldom therein could I look,  
 For I had too much to think,  
 Heaven and earth to eat and drink.  
 Is he hapless who can spare  
 In his plenty things so rare?

1840?

1883.

<sup>7</sup> Compare Emerson's essay on 'Poetry and Imagination,' in *Letters and Social Aims*: 'Michael Angelo is largely filled with the Creator that made and makes men. How much of the original craft remains in him, and he a mortal man! . . . He knows that he did not make his thought, — no, his thought made him, and made the sun and stars.'

<sup>8</sup> Emerson wrote to Carlyle, in April, 1840: 'You asked me if I read German. . . . I have contrived to read almost every volume of Goethe, and I have fifty-five, but I have read nothing else — but I have not now looked even into Goethe, for a long time.'

## WOODNOTES

I

I

WHEN the pine tosses its cones  
 To the song of its waterfall tones,  
 Who speeds to the woodland walks?  
 To birds and trees who talks?  
 Cæsar of his leafy Rome,  
 There the poet is at home.  
 He goes to the river-side, —  
 Not hook nor line hath he;  
 He stands in the meadows wide, —  
 Nor gun nor scythe to see.  
 Sure some god his eye enchants:  
 What he knows nobody wants.  
 In the wood he travels glad,  
 Without better fortune had,  
 Melancholy without bad.  
 Knowledge this man prizes best  
 Seems fantastic to the rest:  
 Pondering shadows, colors, clouds,  
 Grass-buds and caterpillar-shrouds,  
 Boughs on which the wild bees settle,  
 Tints that spot the violet's petal,  
 Why Nature loves the number five,  
 And why the star-form she repeats:<sup>1</sup>  
 Lover of all things alive,  
 Wonderer at all he meets,  
 Wonderer chiefly at himself,  
 Who can tell him what he is?  
 Or how meet in human elf  
 Coming and past eternities?

2

And such I knew, a forest seer,  
 A minstrel of the natural year,  
 Foreteller of the vernal ides,  
 Wise harbinger of spheres and tides,  
 A lover true, who knew by heart  
 Each joy the mountain dales impart;  
 It seemed that Nature could not raise  
 A plant in any secret place,  
 In quaking bog, on snowy hill,  
 Beneath the grass that shades the rill,  
 Under the snow, between the rocks,  
 In damp fields known to bird and fox,  
 But he would come in the very hour  
 It opened in its virgin bower,

<sup>1</sup> Trifles move us more than laws. Why am I more curious to know the reason why the star-form is so oft repeated in botany, or why the number five is such a favorite with Nature, than to understand the circulation of the sap and the formation of buds? (*Journal*, 1835.)

As if a sunbeam showed the place,  
 And tell its long-descended race.  
 It seemed as if the breezes brought him,  
 It seemed as if the sparrows taught him;  
 As if by secret sight he knew  
 Where, in far fields, the orchis grew.  
 Many haps fall in the field  
 Seldom seen by wishful eyes,  
 But all her shows did Nature yield,  
 To please and win this pilgrim wise.  
 He saw the partridge drum in the woods;<sup>2</sup>  
 He heard the woodcock's evening hymn;  
 He found the tawny thrushes' broods;  
 And the shy hawk did wait for him;<sup>3</sup>  
 What others did at distance hear,  
 And guessed within the thicket's gloom,  
 Was shown to this philosopher,  
 And at his bidding seemed to come.<sup>4</sup>

3

In unploughed Maine he sought the lum-  
 berers' gang  
 Where from a hundred lakes young rivers  
 sprang;  
 He trode the unplanted forest floor, whereon  
 The all-seeing sun for ages hath not shone;  
 Where feeds the moose, and walks the surly  
 bear,  
 And up the tall mast runs the woodpecker.  
 He saw beneath dim aisles, in odorous beds,  
 The slight Linnea hang its twin-born heads,  
 And blessed the monument of the man of  
 flowers,  
 Which breathes his sweet fame through the  
 northern bowers.  
 He heard, when in the grove, at intervals,  
 With sudden roar the aged pine-tree falls,—  
 One crash, the death-hymn of the perfect  
 tree,  
 Declares the close of its green century.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Emerson's 'Thoreau': 'His powers of observation seemed to indicate additional senses. He saw as with microscope, heard as with ear-trumpet, and his memory was a photographic register of all he saw and heard. And yet none knew better than he that it is not the fact that imports but the impression or effect of the fact on your mind. Every fact lay in glory in his mind, a type of the order and beauty of the whole.'

<sup>3</sup> Compare the 'Thoreau' again: 'He knew how to sit immovable, a part of the rock he rested on, until the bird, the reptile, the fish, which had retired from him, should come back and resume its habits,—nay, moved by curiosity, should come to him and watch him.'

<sup>4</sup> The passages about the forest seer fit Thoreau so well that the general belief that Mr. Emerson had him in mind may be accepted, but one member of the family recalls his saying that a part of this picture was drawn before he knew Thoreau's gifts and experiences. (E. W. EMERSON, in the *Centenary Edition*.)

Low lies the plant to whose creation went  
 Sweet influence from every element;  
 Whose living towers the years conspired to  
     build,  
 Whose giddy top the morning loved to gild.  
 Through these green tents, by eldest Nature  
     dressed, 80  
 He roamed, content alike with man and  
     beast.  
 Where darkness found him he lay glad at  
     night;  
 There the red morning touched him with its  
     light.  
 Three moons his great heart him a hermit  
     made,  
 So long he roved at will the boundless shade.  
 The timid it concerns to ask their way,  
 And fear what foe in caves and swamps can  
     stray,  
 To make no step until the event is known,  
 And ills to come as evils past bemoan.  
 Not so the wise; no coward watch he  
     keeps 90  
 To spy what danger on his pathway creeps;  
 Go where he will, the wise man is at home,<sup>1</sup>  
 His hearth the earth, — his hall the azure  
     dome;  
 Where his clear spirit leads him, there's  
     his road  
 By God's own light illumined and fore-  
     showed.

4

'T was one of the charmed days  
 When the genius of God doth flow;  
 The wind may alter twenty ways,  
 A tempest cannot blow;  
 It may blow north, it still is warm; 100  
 Or south, it still is clear;  
 Or east, it smells like a clover-farm;  
 Or west, no thunder fear.  
 The musing peasant, lowly great,  
 Beside the forest water sate;  
 The rope-like pine-roots crosswise grown  
 Composed the network of his throne;  
 The wide lake, edged with sand and grass,  
 Was burnished to a floor of glass,  
 Painted with shadows green and proud 110  
 Of the tree and of the cloud.  
 He was the heart of all the scene;  
 On him the sun looked more serene;  
 To hill and cloud his face was known, —  
 It seemed the likeness of their own;  
 They knew by secret sympathy

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the note on 'Written in Naples,' p. 60.

The public child of earth and sky.  
 'You ask,' he said, 'what guide  
 Me through trackless thickets led,  
 Through thick-stemmed woodlands rough  
     and wide. 120  
 I found the water's bed.  
 The watercourses were my guide;  
 I travelled grateful by their side,  
 Or through their channel dry;  
 They led me through the thicket damp,  
 Through brake and fern, the beavers' camp,  
 Through beds of granite cut my road,  
 And their resistless friendship showed.  
 The falling waters led me,  
 The foodful waters fed me, 130  
 And brought me to the lowest land,  
 Unerring to the ocean sand.  
 The moss upon the forest bark  
 Was pole-star when the night was dark;  
 The purple berries in the wood  
 Supplied me necessary food;  
 For Nature ever faithful is  
 To such as trust her faithfulness.  
 When the forest shall mislead me,  
 When the night and morning lie, 140  
 When sea and land refuse to feed me,  
 'T will be time enough to die;  
 Then will yet my mother yield  
 A pillow in her greenest field,  
 Nor the June flowers scorn to cover  
 The clay of their departed lover.'

1840.

WOODNOTES<sup>2</sup>

## II

*As sunbeams stream through liberal space  
 And nothing jostle or displace,  
 So waved the pine-tree through my thought  
 And fanned the dreams it never brought.*

'Whether is better, the gift or the donor?  
 Come to me,'

<sup>2</sup> The stately white pine of New England was Emerson's favorite tree. . . . This poem records the actual fact; nearly every day, summer or winter, when at home, he went to listen to its song. The pine grove by Walden, still standing, though injured by time and fire, was one of his most valued possessions. He questioned whether he should not name his book *Forest Essays*, for, he said, 'I have scarce a day-dream on which the breath of the pines has not blown and their shadow waved.' The great pine on the ridge over Sleepy Hollow was chosen by him as his monument. When a youth, in Newton, he had written, 'Here sit Mother and I under the pine-trees, still almost as we shall lie by and by under them.' — (E. W. Emerson, in the *Centenary Edition*.)



Quoth the pine-tree,  
 'I am the giver of honor.  
 My garden is the cloven rock,  
 And my manure the snow; 10  
 And drifting sand-heaps feed my stock,  
 In summer's scorching glow.  
 He is great who can live by me:  
 The rough and bearded forester  
 Is better than the lord;  
 God fills the scrip and canister,  
 Sin piles the loaded board.  
 The lord is the peasant that was,  
 The peasant the lord that shall be;  
 The lord is hay, the peasant grass, 20  
 One dry, and one the living tree.  
 Who liveth by the ragged pine  
 Foundeth a heroic line;  
 Who liveth in the palace hall  
 Waneth fast and spendeth all.<sup>1</sup>  
 He goes to my savage haunts,  
 With his chariot and his care;  
 My twilight realm he disenchanta,  
 And finds his prison there.

'What prizes the town and the tower? 30  
 Only what the pine-tree yields;  
 Sinew that subdued the fields;  
 The wild-eyed boy, who in the woods  
 Chants his hymn to hills and floods,  
 Whom the city's poisoning spleen  
 Made not pale, or fat, or lean;  
 Whom the rain and the wind purgeth,  
 Whom the dawn and the day-star urgeth,  
 In whose cheek the rose-leaf blusheth,  
 In whose feet the lion rusheth 40  
 Iron arms, and iron mould,  
 That know not fear, fatigue, or cold.  
 I give my rafters to his boat,  
 My billets to his boiler's throat,  
 And I will swim the ancient sea  
 To float my child to victory,  
 And grant to dwellers with the pine  
 Dominion o'er the palm and vine.  
 Who leaves the pine-tree, leaves his friend,  
 Unnerves his strength, invites his end. 50  
 Cut a bough from my parent stem,  
 And dip it in thy porcelain vase;  
 A little while each russet gem  
 Will swell and rise with wonted grace;  
 But when it seeks enlarged supplies,  
 The orphan of the forest dies.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the essay on 'Manners:' 'The city would have died out, rotted and exploded, long ago, but that it was reinforced from the fields. It is only country which came to town day before yesterday that is city and court to-day.'

Whoso walks in solitude  
 And inhabiteth the wood,  
 Choosing light, wave, rock and bird, 60  
 Before the money-loving herd,  
 Into that forester shall pass,  
 From these companions, power and grace.  
 Clean shall he be, without, within,  
 From the old adhering sin,  
 All ill dissolving in the light  
 Of his triumphant piercing sight:  
 Not vain, sour, nor frivolous;  
 Not mad, athirst, nor garrulous;  
 Grave, chaste, contented, though retired, 70  
 And of all other men desired.  
 On him the light of star and moon  
 Shall fall with purer radiance down;  
 All constellations of the sky  
 Shed their virtue through his eye.  
 Him Nature giveth for defence  
 His formidable innocence;  
 The mountain sap, the shells, the sea,  
 All spheres, all stones, his helpers be;  
 He shall meet the speeding year, 80  
 Without wailing, without fear;  
 He shall be happy in his love,  
 Like to like shall joyful prove;  
 He shall be happy whilst he wooes,  
 Muse-born, a daughter of the Muse.  
 But if with gold she bind her hair,  
 And deck her breast with diamond,  
 Take off thine eyes, thy heart forbear,  
 Though thou lie alone on the ground.

'Heed the old oracles,  
 Ponder my spells; 90  
 Song wakes in my pinnacles  
 When the wind swells.  
 Soundeth the prophetic wind,  
 The shadows shake on the rock behind,  
 And the countless leaves of the pine are  
 strings  
 Tuned to the lay the wood-god sings.  
 Hearken! Hearken!  
 If thou wouldst know the mystic song  
 Chanted when the sphere was young.  
 Aloft, abroad, the pæan swells; 100  
 O wise man! hear'st thou half it tells?  
 O wise man! hear'st thou the least part?  
 'Tis the chronicle of art.  
 To the open ear it sings  
 Sweet the genesis of things,  
 Of tendency through endless ages,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> These lines are a sort of poetic 'Doctrine of Evolution.' Compare the 1849 motto of Emerson's 'Nature' (p. 77). It is interesting to remember Tyndall's

Of star-dust, and star-pilgrimages,  
 Of rounded worlds, of space and time,  
 Of the old flood's subsiding slime,  
 Of chemic matter, force and form, 110  
 Of poles and powers, cold, wet, and warm:  
 The rushing metamorphosis  
 Dissolving all that fixture is,  
 Melts things that be to things that seem,  
 And solid nature to a dream.  
 O, listen to the undersong,  
 The ever old, the ever young;  
 And, far within those cadent pauses,  
 The chorus of the ancient Causes!  
 Delights the dreadful Destiny 120  
 To fling his voice into the tree,  
 And shock thy weak ear with a note  
 Breathed from the everlasting throat.  
 In music he repeats the pang  
 Whence the fair flock of Nature sprang.  
 O mortal! thy ears are stones;  
 These echoes are laden with tones  
 Which only the pure can hear;  
 Thou canst not catch what they recite  
 Of Fate and Will, of Want and Right, 130  
 Of man to come, of human life,  
 Of Death and Fortune, Growth and Strife.'

Once again the pine-tree sung:—  
 'Speak not thy speech my boughs among:  
 Put off thy years, wash in the breeze;  
 My hours are peaceful centuries.  
 Talk no more with feeble tongue;  
 No more the fool of space and time,  
 Come weave with mine a nobler rhyme.  
 Only thy Americans 140  
 Can read thy line, can meet thy glance,  
 But the runes that I rehearse  
 Understands the universe;  
 The least breath my boughs which tossed  
 Brings again the Pentecost;  
 To every soul resounding clear  
 In a voice of solemn cheer,—  
 "Am I not thine? Are not these thine?"  
 And they reply, "Forever mine!"  
 My branches speak Italian, 150  
 English, German, Basque, Castilian,  
 Mountain speech to Highlanders,  
 Ocean tongues to islanders,  
 To Fin and Lap and swart Malay,  
 To each his bosom-secret say.

'Come learn with me the fatal song  
 Which knits the world in music strong,

saying: 'Whatever I have done the world owes to Emerson.'

Come lift thine eyes to lofty rhymes,  
 Of things with things, of times with times,  
 Primal chimes of sun and shade, 160  
 Of sound and echo, man and maid,  
 The land reflected in the flood,  
 Body with shadow still pursued.  
 For Nature beats in perfect tune,  
 And rounds with rhyme her every rune,  
 Whether she work in land or sea,  
 Or hide underground her alchemy.  
 Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,  
 Or dip thy paddle in the lake,  
 But it carves the bow of beauty there, 170  
 And the ripples in rhymes the oar forsake.<sup>1</sup>  
 The wood is wiser far than thou;  
 The wood and wave each other know  
 Not unrelated, unaffied,  
 But to each thought and thing allied,  
 Is perfect Nature's every part,  
 Rooted in the mighty Heart.  
 But thou, poor child! unbound, unrhymed,  
 Whence camest thou, misplaced, mistimed,  
 Whence, O thou orphan and defrauded? 180  
 Is thy land peeled, thy realm marauded?  
 Who thee divorced, deceived and left?  
 Thee of thy faith who hath bereft,  
 And torn the ensigns from thy brow,  
 And sunk the immortal eye so low?  
 Thy cheek too white, thy form too slender,  
 Thy gait too slow, thy habits tender  
 For royal man;—they thee confess  
 An exile from the wilderness,—  
 The hills where health with health agrees,  
 And the wise soul expels disease. 191  
 Hark! in thy ear I will tell the sign  
 By which thy hurt thou may'st divine.  
 When thou shalt climb the mountain cliff,  
 Or see the wide shore from thy skiff,  
 To thee the horizon shall express  
 But emptiness on emptiness;  
 There lives no man of Nature's worth  
 In the circle of the earth;  
 And to thine eye the vast skies fall, 200  
 Dire and satirical,

<sup>1</sup> 'As for beauty, I need not look beyond an oar's length for my fill of it.' I do not know whether he [William Ellery Channing] used the expression with design or no, but my eye rested on the charming play of light on the water which he was striking with his paddle. I fancied I had never seen such color, such transparency, such eddies; it was the hue of Rhine wines, it was jasper and verd-antique, topaz and chalcedony, it was gold and green and chestnut and hazel in bewitching succession and relief, without cloud or confusion. (*Journal*, 1846.)

Compare also the paragraph in Emerson's 'Nature' beginning: 'It seems as if the day was not wholly profane in which we have given heed to some natural object.'



On clucking hens and prating fools,  
 On thieves, on drudges and on dolls.  
 And thou shalt say to the Most High,  
 "Godhead! all this astronomy,  
 And fate and practice and invention,  
 Strong art and beautiful pretension,  
 This radiant pomp of sun and star,  
 Throes that were, and worlds that are,  
 Behold! were in vain and in vain; — 210  
 It cannot be, — I will look again.<sup>1</sup>  
 Surely now will the curtain rise,  
 And earth's fit tenant me surprise; —  
 But the curtain doth *not* rise,  
 And Nature has miscarried wholly  
 Into failure, into folly."

'Alas! thine is the bankruptcy,  
 Blessed Nature so to see.  
 Come, lay thee in my soothing shade,  
 And heal the hurts which sin has made. 220  
 I see thee in the crowd alone;  
 I will be thy companion.  
 Quit thy friends as the dead in doom,  
 And build to them a final tomb;  
 Let the starred shade that nightly falls  
 Still celebrate their funerals,  
 And the bell of beetle and of bee  
 Knell their melodious memory.  
 Behind thee leave thy merchandise,  
 Thy churches and thy charities; 230  
 And leave thy peacock wit behind;  
 Enough for thee the primal mind  
 That flows in streams, that breathes in wind:  
 Leave all thy pedant lore apart;  
 God hid the whole world in thy heart.  
 Love shuns the sage, the child it crowns,  
 Gives all to them who all renounce.  
 The rain comes when the wind calls;  
 The river knows the way to the sea;  
 Without a pilot it runs and falls, 240  
 Blessing all lands with its charity;  
 The sea tosses and foams to find  
 Its way up to the cloud and wind;  
 The shadow sits close to the flying ball;  
 The date fails not on the palm-tree tall;  
 And thou, — go burn thy wormy pages, —  
 Shalt outsee seers, and outwit sages.  
 Oft didst thou thread the woods in vain  
 To find what bird had piped the strain: —

<sup>1</sup> What has the imagination created to compare with the science of Astronomy? What is there in *Paradise Lost* to elevate and astonish like Herschel or Somerville? The contrast between the magnitude and duration of the things, and the animalcule observer! . . . I hope the time will come when there will be a telescope in every street. (*Journal*, May, 1832.)

Seek not, and the little eremite 250  
 Flies gayly forth and sings in sight.

'Hearken once more!  
 I will tell thee the mundane lore.  
 Older am I than thy numbers wot,  
 Change I may, but I pass not.  
 Hitherto all things fast abide,  
 And anchored in the tempest ride.  
 Trenchant time behoves to hurry  
 All to yeon and all to bury:  
 All the forms are fugitive, 260  
 But the substances survive.  
 Ever fresh the broad creation,  
 A divine improvisation,  
 From the heart of God proceeds,  
 A single will, a million deeds.  
 Once slept the world an egg of stone,  
 And pulse, and sound, and light was none;  
 And God said, "Throb!" and there was  
 motion  
 And the vast mass became vast ocean.  
 Onward and on, the eternal Pan, 270  
 Who layeth the world's incessant plan,  
 Halteth never in one shape,  
 But forever doth escape,  
 Like wave or flame, into new forms  
 Of gem, and air, of plants, and worms.  
 I, that to-day am a pine,  
 Yesterday was a bundle of grass.  
 He is free and libertine,  
 Pouring of his power the wine  
 To every age, to every race; 280  
 Unto every race and age  
 He emptieth the beverage;  
 Unto each, and unto all,  
 Maker and original.  
 The world is the ring of his spells,  
 And the play of his miracles.  
 As he giveth to all to drink,  
 Thus or thus they are and think.  
 With one drop sheds form and feature;  
 With the next a special nature; 290  
 The third adds heat's indulgent spark;  
 The fourth gives light which eats the dark;  
 Into the fifth himself he flings,  
 And conscious Law is King of kings.  
 As the bee through the garden ranges,  
 From world to world the godhead changes;  
 As the sheep go feeding in the waste,  
 From form to form He maketh haste;  
 This vault which glows immense with light  
 Is the inn where he lodges for a night. 300  
 What reck's such Traveller if the bowers  
 Which bloom and fade like meadow flowers

A bunch of fragrant lilies be,  
 Or the stars of eternity?  
 Alike to him the better, the worse, —  
 The glowing angel, the outcast corse.  
 Thou metest him by centuries,  
 And lo! he passes like the breeze;  
 Thou seek'st in globe and galaxy,  
 He hides in pure transparency; 310  
 Thou askest in fountains and in fires,  
 He is the essence that inquires.  
 He is the axis of the star;  
 He is the sparkle of the spar;  
 He is the heart of every creature;  
 He is the meaning of each feature;  
 And his mind is the sky,  
 Than all it holds more deep, more high.' 1841.

THE SPHINX<sup>1</sup>

THE Sphinx is drowsy,  
 Her wings are furled:  
 Her ear is heavy,  
 She broods on the world.  
 'Who'll tell me my secret,  
 The ages have kept? —  
 I awaited the seer  
 While they slumbered and slept: —

'The fate of the man-child,  
 The meaning of man; 10  
 Known fruit of the unknown;  
 Dædalian plan;  
 Out of sleeping a waking,  
 Out of waking a sleep;  
 Life death overtaking;  
 Deep underneath deep?

'Erect as a sunbeam,  
 Upspringeth the palm;  
 The elephant browses,  
 Undaunted and calm; 20  
 In beautiful motion  
 The thrush plies his wings;  
 Kind leaves of his covert,  
 Your silence he sings.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Emerson wrote in his note-book in 1859: 'I have often been asked the meaning of the "Sphinx." It is this: The perception of identity unites all things and explains one by another, and the most rare and strange is equally facile as the most common. But if the mind live only in particulars, and see only differences (wanting the power to see the whole — all in each), then the world addresses to this mind a question it cannot answer, and each new fact tears it in pieces and it is vanquished by the distracting variety.' (*Centenary Edition*.)

'The waves, unashamed,  
 In difference sweet,  
 Play glad with the breezes,  
 Old playfellows meet;  
 The journeying atoms,  
 Primordial wholes, 30  
 Firmly draw, firmly drive,  
 By their animate poles.

'Sea, earth, air, sound, silence,  
 Plant, quadruped, bird,  
 By one music enchanted,  
 One deity stirred, —  
 Each the other adorning,  
 Accompany still;  
 Night veileth the morning,  
 The vapor the hill. 40

'The babe by its mother  
 Lies bathed in joy;  
 Glide its hours uncounted, —  
 The sun is its toy;  
 Shines the peace of all being,  
 Without cloud, in its eyes;  
 And the sum of the world  
 In soft miniature lies.

'But man crouches and blushes,  
 Absconds and conceals; 50  
 He creepeth and peepeth,  
 He paltereth and steals;  
 Infirm, melancholy,  
 Jealous glancing around,  
 An oaf, an accomplice,  
 He poisons the ground.<sup>2</sup>

'Out spoke the great mother,  
 Beholding his fear; —  
 At the sound of her accents  
 Cold shuddered the sphere: — 60  
 "Who has drugged my boy's cup?  
 Who has mixed my boy's bread?  
 Who, with sadness and madness,  
 Has turned my child's head?"'

I heard a poet answer  
 Aloud and cheerfully,  
 'Say on, sweet Sphinx! thy dirges

<sup>2</sup> Compare Emerson's essay on 'Self-Reliance': 'Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. . . . Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say "I think," "I am," but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose.'

Are pleasant songs to me.  
Deep love lieth under  
These pictures of time;  
They fade in the light of  
Their meaning sublime.

70

'The fiend that man harries  
Is love of the Best;  
Yawns the pit of the Dragon,  
Lit by rays from the Blest.  
The Lethe of Nature  
Can't trance him again,  
Whose soul sees the perfect,  
Which his eyes seek in vain.

80

'To vision profounder,  
Man's spirit must dive;  
His aye-rolling orb  
At no goal will arrive;  
The heavens that now draw him  
With sweetness untold,  
Once found, — for new heavens  
He spurneth the old.<sup>1</sup>

'Pride ruined the angels,  
Their shame them restores;  
Lurks the joy that is sweetest  
In stings of remorse.  
Have I a lover  
Who is noble and free? —  
I would he were nobler  
Than to love me.

90

'Eterne alternation  
Now follows, now flies;  
And under pain, pleasure, —  
Under pleasure, pain lies.  
Love works at the centre,  
Heart-heaving alway;  
Forth speed the strong pulses  
To the borders of day.

100

'Dull Sphinx, Jove keep thy five wits;  
Thy sight is growing blear;  
Rue, myrrh and cummin for the Sphinx,  
Her muddy eyes to clear!  
The old Sphinx bit her thick lip, —  
Said, 'Who taught thee me to name?  
I am thy spirit, yoke-fellow;  
Of thine eye I am eyebeam.

110

<sup>1</sup> Compare Emerson's address on 'The American Scholar,' the paragraph beginning: 'First one, then another, we drain all cisterns, and waxing greater by all these supplies, we crave a better and more abundant food.'

'Thou art the unanswered question;  
Couldst see thy proper eye,  
Alway it asketh, asketh;  
And each answer is a lie.  
So take thy quest through nature,  
It through thousand natures ply;  
Ask on, thou clothed eternity;  
Time is the false reply.'

120

Uprose the merry Sphinx,  
And crouched no more in stone;  
She melted into purple cloud,  
She silvered in the moon;  
She spired into a yellow flame;  
She flowered in blossoms red;  
She flowed into a foaming wave:  
She stood Monadnoc's head.

Thorough a thousand voices  
Spoke the universal dame;  
'Who telleth one of my meanings  
Is master of all I am.'

130

1841.

### THE SNOW-STORM

ANNOUNCED by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the  
fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the  
heaven,  
And veils the farm-house at the garden's  
end.  
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's  
feet  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the house-  
mates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.  
Out of an unseen quarry evermore  
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer  
Curves his white bastions with projected  
roof  
Round every windward stake, or tree, or  
door.  
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work  
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he  
For number or proportion. Mockingly,  
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;  
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;  
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to  
wall,

Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate  
 A tapering turret overtops the work.  
 And when his hours are numbered, and the  
     world  
 Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,  
 Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished  
     Art  
 To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,  
 Built in an age, the mad wind's night-  
     work,  
 The frolic architecture of the snow.

1841.

## FABLE

THE mountain and the squirrel  
 Had a quarrel,  
 And the former called the latter 'Little  
     Prig;'  
 Bun replied,  
 'You are doubtless very big;  
 But all sorts of things and weather  
 Must be taken in together,  
 To make up a year  
 And a sphere.  
 And I think it no disgrace  
 To occupy my place.  
 If I'm not so large as you,  
 You are not so small as I,  
 And not half so spry.  
 I'll not deny you make  
 A very pretty squirrel track;  
 Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;  
 If I cannot carry forests on my back,  
 Neither can you crack a nut.'

1840?

1846.

THE INFORMING SPIRIT<sup>1</sup>

## I

THERE is no great and no small  
 To the Soul that maketh all:  
 And where it cometh, all things are;  
 And it cometh everywhere.

## II

I am owner of the sphere,  
 Of the seven stars and the solar year,  
 Of Cæsar's hand, and Plato's brain,  
 Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakspeare's  
     strain.

1841.

<sup>1</sup> First printed, without title, as motto to the essay  
 on 'History.'

FRIENDSHIP<sup>2</sup>

A RUDDY drop of manly blood  
 The surging sea outweighs,  
 The world uncertain comes and goes;  
 The lover rooted stays.  
 I fancied he was fled, —  
 And, after many a year,  
 Glowed unexhausted kindness,  
 Like daily sunrise there.  
 My careful heart was free again,  
 O friend, my bosom said,  
 Through thee alone the sky is arched,  
 Through thee the rose is red;  
 All things through thee take nobler form,  
 And look beyond the earth,  
 The mill-round of our fate appears  
 A sun-path in thy worth.  
 Me too thy nobleness has taught  
 To master my despair;  
 The fountains of my hidden life  
 Are through thy friendship fair.

1841.

## FORBEARANCE

HAST thou named all the birds without a  
     gun?  
 Loved the wood-rose, and left it on its  
     stalk?  
 At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?  
 Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of  
     trust?  
 And loved so well a high behavior,  
 In man or maid, that thou from speech re-  
     frained,  
 Nobility more nobly to repay?  
 O, be my friend, and teach me to be  
     thine!

1842.

## HOLIDAYS

FROM fall to spring, the russet acorn,  
 Fruit beloved of maid and boy,  
 Lent itself beneath the forest,  
 To be the children's toy.

Pluck it now! In vain, — thou canst not;  
 Its root has pierced yon shady mound;  
 Toy no longer — it has duties;  
 It is anchored in the ground.

<sup>2</sup> First printed as motto to the essay on 'Friend-  
 ship.'

Year by year the rose-lipped maiden,  
 Playfellow of young and old,  
 Was frolic sunshine, dear to all men,  
 More dear to one than mines of gold.

Whither went the lovely hoyden?  
 Disappeared in blessed wife;  
 Servant to a wooden cradle,  
 Living in a baby's life.

Still thou playest; — short vacation  
 Fate grants each to stand aside;  
 Now must thou be man and artist, —  
 'T is the turning of the tide.

1842.

SAADI<sup>1</sup>

TREES in groves,  
 Kine in droves,  
 In ocean sport the scaly herds,  
 Wedge-like cleave the air the birds,  
 To northern lakes fly wind-borne ducks,  
 Browse the mountain sheep in flocks,  
 Men consort in camp and town,  
 But the poet dwells alone.

God, who gave to him the lyre,  
 Of all mortals the desire,  
 For all breathing men's behoof,  
 Straitly charged him, 'Sit aloof;  
 Annexed a warning, poets say,  
 To the bright premium, —  
 Ever, when twain together play,  
 Shall the harp be dumb.

10

Many may come,  
 But one shall sing;  
 Two touch the string,  
 The harp is dumb.  
 Though there come a million,  
 Wise Saadi dwells alone.

20

Yet Saadi loved the race of men, —  
 No churl, immured in cave or den;  
 In bower and hall  
 He wants them all,  
 Nor can dispense

<sup>1</sup> It does not appear in what year Mr. Emerson first read in translation the poems of Saadi, but although in later years he seems to have been strangely stimulated by Hafiz, whom he names 'the prince of Persian poets,' yet Saadi was his first love; indeed, he adopted his name, in its various modifications, for the ideal poet, and under it describes his own longings and his most intimate experiences. (E. W. EMERSON.)

With Persia for his audience;  
 They must give ear,  
 Grow red with joy and white with fear;  
 But he has no companion;  
 Come ten, or come a million,  
 Good Saadi dwells alone.

31

Be thou ware where Saadi dwells;  
 Wisdom of the gods is he, —  
 Entertain it reverently.  
 Gladly round that golden lamp  
 Sylvan deities encamp,  
 And simple maids and noble youth  
 Are welcome to the man of truth.  
 Most welcome they who need him most,  
 They feed the spring which they exhaust;  
 For greater need  
 Draws better deed:  
 But, critic, spare thy vanity,  
 Nor show thy pompous parts,  
 To vex with odious subtlety  
 The cheerer of men's hearts.

40

Sad-eyed Fakirs swiftly say  
 Endless dirges to decay,  
 Never in the blaze of light  
 Lose the shudder of midnight;  
 Pale at overflowing noon  
 Hear wolves barking at the moon;  
 In the bower of dalliance sweet  
 Hear the far Avenger's feet:  
 And shake before those awful Powers,  
 Who in their pride forgive not ours.  
 Thus the sad-eyed Fakirs preach:  
 'Bard, when thee would Allah teach,  
 And lift thee to his holy mount,  
 He sends thee from his bitter fount  
 Wormwood, — saying, "Go thy ways;  
 Drink not the Malaga of praise,  
 But do the deed thy fellows hate,  
 And compromise thy peaceful state;  
 Smite the white breasts which thee fed,  
 Stuff sharp thorns beneath the head  
 Of them thou shouldst have comforted;  
 For out of woe and out of crime  
 Draws the heart a lore sublime."  
 And yet it seemeth not to me  
 That the high gods love tragedy;  
 For Saadi sat in the sun,  
 And thanks was his contrition;  
 For haircloth and for bloody whips,  
 Had active hands and smiling lips;  
 And yet his runes he rightly read,  
 And to his folk his message sped.  
 Sunshine in his heart transferred

50

60

70

80

Lighted each transparent word,  
And well could honoring Persia learn  
What Saadi wished to say;  
For Saadi's nightly stars did burn  
Brighter than Jami's day.

Whispered the Muse in Saadi's cot:  
'O gentle Saadi, listen not,  
Tempted by thy praise of wit,  
Or by thirst and appetite  
For the talents not thine own, 90  
To sons of contradiction.  
Never, son of eastern morning,  
Follow falsehood, follow scorning.  
Denounce who will, who will deny,  
And pile the hills to scale the sky;  
Let theist, atheist, pantheist,  
Define and wrangle how they list,  
Fierce conserver, fierce destroyer, —  
But thou, joy-giver and enjoyer, 100  
Unknowing war, unknowing crime,  
Gentle Saadi, mind thy rhyme;  
Heed not what the brawlers say,  
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.<sup>1</sup>

'Let the great world bustle on  
With war and trade, with camp and town;  
A thousand men shall dig and eat;  
At forge and furnace thousands sweat;  
And thousands sail the purple sea,  
And give or take the stroke of war,  
Or crowd the market and bazaar; 110  
Oft shall war end, and peace return,  
And cities rise where cities burn,  
Ere one man my hill shall climb,  
Who can turn the golden rhyme.  
Let them manage how they may,  
Heed thou only Saadi's lay.  
Seek the living among the dead, —  
Man in man is imprisonèd;  
Barefooted Dervish is not poor,  
If fate unlock his bosom's door, 120  
So that what his eye hath seen  
His tongue can paint as bright, as keen;  
And what his tender heart hath felt

With equal fire thy heart shalt melt.  
For, whom the Muses smile upon,  
And touch with soft persuasion,  
His words like a storm-wind can bring  
Terror and beauty on their wing;  
In his every syllable  
Lurketh Nature veritable; 130  
And though he speak in midnight dark, —  
In heaven no star, on earth no spark, —  
Yet before the listener's eye  
Swims the world in ecstasy,  
The forest waves, the morning breaks,  
The pastures sleep, ripple the lakes,  
Leaves twinkle, flowers like persons be,  
And life pulsates in rock or tree.  
Saadi, so far thy words shall reach:  
Suns rise and set in Saadi's speech! 140

And thus to Saadi said the Muse:  
'Eat thou the bread which men refuse;  
Flee from the goods which from thee flee;  
Seek nothing, — Fortune seeketh thee.  
Nor mount, nor dive; all good things keep  
The midway of the eternal deep.  
Wish not to fill the isles with eyes  
To fetch the birds of paradise:  
On thine orchard's edge belong 150  
All the brags of plume and song;  
Wise Ali's sunbright sayings pass  
For proverbs in the market-place:  
Through mountains bored by regal art,  
Toil whistles as he drives his cart.  
Nor scour the seas, nor sift mankind,  
A poet or a friend to find:  
Behold, he watches at the door!  
Behold his shadow on the floor!  
Open innumerable doors  
The heaven where unveiled Allah pours 160  
The flood of truth, the flood of good,  
The Seraph's and the Cherub's food.  
Those doors are men: the Pariah hind  
Admits thee to the perfect Mind.  
Seek not beyond thy cottage wall  
Redeemers that can yield thee all:  
While thou sittest at thy door  
On the desert's yellow floor,  
Listening to the gray-haired crones,  
Foolish gossips, ancient drones, 170  
Saadi, see! they rise in stature  
To the height of mighty Nature,  
And the secret stands revealed  
Fraudulent Time in vain concealed, —  
That blessed gods in servile masks  
Plied for thee thy household tasks.'

<sup>1</sup> Compare the essay on 'Experience': 'So many things are unsettled . . . the debate goes forward . . . much is to say on both sides . . . Right to hold land, right of property, is disputed . . . Dig away in your garden, and spend your earnings as a wail or a god-send, to all serene and beautiful purposes. Life itself is a bubble and a scepticism and a sleep within a sleep. Grant it, and as much more as they will, — but thou, God's darling, heed thy private dream; thou wilt not be missed in the scorning and scepticism; there are enough of them; stay thou in thy closet and toil . . .'



## ODE TO BEAUTY

WHO gave thee, O Beauty,  
 The keys of this breast, —  
 Too credulous lover  
 Of blest and unblest?  
 Say, when in lapsed ages  
 Thee knew I of old?  
 Or what was the service  
 For which I was sold?  
 When first my eyes saw thee,  
 I found me thy thrall,  
 By magical drawings,  
 Sweet tyrant of all!  
 I drank at thy fountain  
 False waters of thirst;  
 Thou intimate stranger,  
 Thou latest and first!  
 Thy dangerous glances  
 Make women of men;  
 New-born, we are melting  
 Into nature again.

Lavish, lavish promiser,  
 Nigh persuading gods to err!  
 Guest of million painted forms,  
 Which in turn thy glory warms!  
 The frailest leaf, the mossy bark,  
 The acorn's cup, the raindrop's arc,  
 The swinging spider's silver line,  
 The ruby of the drop of wine,  
 The shining pebble of the pond,  
 Thou inscribest with a bond,  
 In thy momentary play,  
 Would bankrupt nature to repay.

Ah, what avails it  
 To hide or to shun  
 Whom the Infinite One  
 Hath granted his throne?  
 The heaven high over  
 Is the deep's lover;  
 The sun and sea,  
 Informed by thee,  
 Before me run  
 And draw me on,  
 Yet fly me still,  
 As Fate refuses  
 To me the heart Fate for me chooses.  
 Is it that my opulent soul  
 Was mingled from the generous whole;  
 Sea-valleys and the deep of skies  
 Furnished several supplies;  
 And the sands whereof I'm made

Draw me to them, self-betrayed?  
 I turn the proud portfolio  
 Which holds the grand designs  
 Of Salvator, of Guercino,  
 And Piranesi's lines.  
 I hear the lofty pæans  
 Of the masters of the shell,  
 Who heard the starry music  
 And recount the numbers well;  
 Olympian bards who sung  
 Divine Ideas below,  
 Which always find us young  
 And always keep us so.  
 Oft, in streets or humblest places,  
 I detect far-wandered graces,  
 Which, from Eden wide astray,  
 In lowly homes have lost their way.

Thee gliding through the sea of form,<sup>1</sup>  
 Like the lightning through the storm,  
 Somewhat not to be possessed,  
 Somewhat not to be caressed,  
 No feet so fleet could ever find,  
 No perfect form could ever bind.  
 Thou eternal fugitive,  
 Hovering over all that live,  
 Quick and skilful to inspire  
 Sweet, extravagant desire,  
 Starry space and lily-bell  
 Filling with thy roseate smell,  
 Wilt not give the lips to taste  
 Of the nectar which thou hast.

All that's good and great with thee  
 Works in close conspiracy;  
 Thou hast bribed the dark and lonely  
 To report thy features only,  
 And the cold and purple morning  
 Itself with thoughts of thee adorning;  
 The leafy dell, the city mart,  
 Equal trophies of thine art;  
 E'en the flowing azure air  
 Thou hast touched for my despair;  
 And, if I languish into dreams,  
 Again I meet the ardent beams.  
 Queen of things! I dare not die  
 In Being's deeps past ear and eye;  
 Lest there I find the same deceiver  
 And be the sport of Fate forever.  
 Dread Power, but dear! if God thou be,  
 Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me!

1843.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Emerson's 'Nature': 'Nature is a sea of forms. . . . What is common to them all, — that perfectness and harmony, — is Beauty.'

NATURE<sup>1</sup>

THE rounded world is fair to see,  
 Nine times folded in mystery:  
 Though baffled seers cannot impart  
 The secret of its laboring heart,  
 Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast,  
 And all is clear from east to west.  
 Spirit that lurks each form within  
 Beckons to spirit of its kin;  
 Self-kindled every atom glows  
 And hints the future which it owes.

1844.

## EXPERIENCE

THE lords of life, the lords of life, —  
 I saw them pass  
 In their own guise,  
 Like and unlike,  
 Portly and grim, —  
 Use and Surprise,  
 Surface and Dream,  
 Succession swift and spectral Wrong,  
 Temperament without a tongue,  
 And the inventor of the game  
 Omnipresent without name; —  
 Some to see, some to be guessed,  
 They marched from east to west:  
 Little man, least of all,  
 Among the legs of his guardians tall,  
 Walked about with puzzled look.  
 Him by the hand dear Nature took,  
 Dearest Nature, strong and kind,  
 Whispered, 'Darling, never mind!  
 To-morrow they will wear another face,  
 The founder thou; these are thy race!'

1844.

THRENODY<sup>2</sup>

THE South-wind brings  
 Life, sunshine and desire,  
 And on every mount and meadow  
 Breathes aromatic fire;

<sup>1</sup> This and the following poem were first used as mottoes for the essays 'Nature' and 'Experience.'

<sup>2</sup> Emerson wrote to Carlyle, February 28, 1842: 'My dear friend, you should have had this letter and these messages by the last steamer; but when it sailed, my son, a perfect little boy of five years and three months, had ended his earthly life. You can never sympathize with me; you can never know how much of me such a young child can take away. A few weeks ago I accounted myself a very rich man, and now the poorest of all. What would it avail to tell you anecdotes of a sweet and wonderful boy, such as we solace and

But over the dead he has no power,  
 The lost, the lost, he cannot restore;  
 And, looking over the hills, I mourn  
 The darling who shall not return.

I see my empty house,  
 I see my trees repair their boughs; 10  
 And he, the wondrous child,  
 Whose silver warble wild  
 Outvalued every pulsing sound  
 Within the air's cerulean round, —  
 The hyacinthine boy, for whom  
 Morn well might break and April bloom,  
 The gracious boy, who did adorn  
 The world whereinto he was born,  
 And by his countenance repay  
 The favor of the loving Day, — 20  
 Has disappeared from the Day's eye;  
 Far and wide she cannot find him;  
 My hopes pursue, they cannot bind him.  
 Returned this day, the South-wind searches,  
 And finds young pines and budding birches;  
 But finds not the budding man;  
 Nature, who lost, cannot remake him;  
 Fate let him fall, Fate can't retake him;  
 Nature, Fate, men, him seek in vain.

And whither now, my truant wise and  
 sweet, 30

O, whither tend thy feet?  
 I had the right, few days ago,  
 Thy steps to watch, thy place to know:  
 How have I forfeited the right?  
 Hast thou forgot me in a new delight?  
 I hearken for thy household cheer,  
 O eloquent child!  
 Whose voice, an equal messenger,  
 Conveyed thy meaning mild.  
 What though the pains and joys 40  
 Whereof it spoke were toys  
 Fitting his age and ken,  
 Yet fairest dames and bearded men,  
 Who heard the sweet request,  
 So gentle, wise and grave,  
 Bended with joy to his behest  
 And let the world's affairs go by,

sadden ourselves with at home every morning and evening? From a perfect health and as happy a life and as happy influences as ever child enjoyed, he was hurried out of my arms in three short days.' (*Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence*, vol. i, pp. 389, 390.)

In his *Journal*, January 30, he wrote: 'This boy, in whose remembrance I have both slept and awaked so oft, decorated for me the morning star and the evening cloud, — how much more all the particulars of daily economy. . . . A boy of early wisdom, of a grave and even majestic deportment, of a perfect gentleness. . . .'

See also Cabot's *Life of Emerson*, vol. ii, pp. 481-489.



A while to share his cordial game,  
Or mend his wicker wagon-frame,  
Still plotting how their hungry ear  
That winsome voice again might hear;  
For his lips could well pronounce  
Words that were persuasions.

Gentlest guardians marked serene  
His early hope, his liberal mien;  
Took counsel from his guiding eyes  
To make this wisdom earthly wise.  
Ah, vainly do these eyes recall  
The school-march, each day's festival,  
When every morn my bosom glowed  
To watch the convoy on the road;  
The babe in willow wagon closed,  
With rolling eyes and face composed;  
With children forward and behind,  
Like Cupids studiously inclined;  
And he the chieftain paced beside,  
The centre of the troop allied,  
With sunny face of sweet repose,  
To guard the babe from fancied foes.  
The little captain innocent  
Took the eye with him as he went;  
Each village senior paused to scan  
And speak the lovely caravan.  
From the window I look out  
To mark thy beautiful parade,  
Stately marching in cap and coat  
To some tune by fairies played; —  
A music heard by thee alone  
To works as noble led thee on.

Now Love and Pride, alas! in vain,  
Up and down their glances strain.  
The painted sled stands where it stood;  
The kennel by the corded wood;  
His gathered sticks to stanch the wall  
Of the snow-tower, when snow should fall;  
The ominous hole he dug in the sand,  
And childhood's castles built or planned;  
His daily haunts I well discern, —  
The poultry-yard, the shed, the barn, —  
And every inch of garden ground  
Paced by the blessed feet around,  
From the roadside to the brook  
Whereinto he loved to look.  
Step the meek fowls where erst they  
ranged;  
The wintry garden lies unchanged;  
The brook into the stream runs on;  
But the deep-eyed boy is gone.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The chrysalis which he brought in with care and tenderness and gave to his mother to keep is still alive,

On that shaded day,  
Dark with more clouds than tempests are,  
When thou didst yield thy innocent  
breath

In birdlike heavings unto death,  
Night came, and Nature had not thee;  
I said, 'We are mates in misery.'  
The morrow dawned with needless glow;  
Each snowbird chirped, each fowl must  
crow;

Each tramper started; but the feet  
Of the most beautiful and sweet  
Of human youth had left the hill  
And garden, — they were bound and still.  
There's not a sparrow or a wren,  
There's not a blade of autumn grain,  
Which the four seasons do not tend  
And tides of life and increase lend;  
And every chick of every bird,  
And weed and rock-moss is preferred.

O ostrich-like forgetfulness!  
O loss of larger in the less!  
Was there no star that could be sent,  
No watcher in the firmament,  
No angel from the countless host  
That loiters round the crystal coast,  
Could stoop to heal that only child,  
Nature's sweet marvel undefiled,  
And keep the blossom of the earth,  
Which all her harvests were not worth?  
Not mine, — I never called thee mine,  
But Nature's heir, — if I repine,  
And seeing rashly torn and moved  
Not what I made, but what I loved,  
Grow early old with grief that thou  
Must to the wastes of Nature go, —  
'Tis because a general hope  
Was quenched, and all must doubt and  
gripe.

For flattering planets seemed to say  
This child should ills of ages stay,  
By wondrous tongue, and guided pen,  
Bring the flown Muses back to men.  
Perchance not he but Nature ailed,  
The world and not the infant failed.  
It was not ripe yet to sustain  
A genius of so fine a strain,  
Who gazed upon the sun and moon  
As if he came unto his own,  
And, pregnant with his grander thought,  
Brought the old order into doubt.  
His beauty once their beauty tried;  
They could not feed him, and he died,

and he, most beautiful of the children of men, is not here. (*Journal*, 1842.)

And wandered backward as in scorn,  
 To wait an æon to be born.  
 Ill day which made this beauty waste, 150  
 Plight broken, this high face defaced !  
 Some went and came about the dead;  
 And some in books of solace read;  
 Some to their friends the tidings say;  
 Some went to write, some went to pray;  
 One tarried here, there hurried one;  
 But their heart abode with none.  
 Covetous death bereaved us all,  
 To aggrandize one funeral.  
 The eager fate which carried thee 160  
 Took the largest part of me:  
 For this losing is true dying;  
 This is lordly man's down-lying,  
 This his slow but sure reclining,  
 Star by star his world resigning.

O child of paradise,  
 Boy who made dear his father's home,  
 In whose deep eyes  
 Men read the welfare of the times to come,  
 I am too much bereft. 170  
 The world dishonored thou hast left.  
 O truth's and nature's costly lie !  
 O trusted broken prophecy !  
 O richest fortune sourly crossed !  
 Born for the future, to the future lost !

The deep Heart answered, 'Weepest thou ?  
 Worthier cause for passion wild  
 If I had not taken the child.  
 And deemest thou as those who pore,  
 With aged eyes, short way before, — 180  
 Think'st Beauty vanished from the coast  
 Of matter, and thy darling lost ?  
 Taught he not thee — the man of eld,  
 Whose eyes within his eyes beheld  
 Heaven's numerous hierarchy span  
 The mystic gulf from God to man ?  
 To be alone wilt thou begin  
 When worlds of lovers hem thee in ?  
 To-morrow, when the masks shall fall  
 That dizen Nature's carnival, 190  
 The pure shall see by their own will,  
 Which overflowing Love shall fill,  
 'Tis not within the force of fate  
 The fate-conjoined to separate.  
 But thou, my votary, weepest thou ?  
 I gave thee sight — where is it now ?  
 I taught thy heart beyond the reach  
 Of ritual, bible, or of speech;  
 Wrote in thy mind's transparent table,  
 As far as the incommunicable; 200

Taught thee each private sign to raise  
 Lit by the supersolar blaze.  
 Past utterance, and past belief,  
 And past the blasphemy of grief,  
 The mysteries of Nature's heart;  
 And though no Muse can these impart,  
 Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast,  
 And all is clear from east to west.

'I came to thee as to a friend;  
 Dearest, to thee I did not send 210  
 Tutors, but a joyful eye,  
 Innocence that matched the sky,  
 Lovely locks, a form of wonder,  
 Laughter rich as woodland thunder,  
 That thou might'st entertain apart  
 The richest flowering of all art:  
 And, as the great all-loving Day  
 Through smallest chambers takes its way,  
 That thou might'st break thy daily bread  
 With prophet, savior and head; 220  
 That thou might'st cherish for thine own  
 The riches of sweet Mary's Son,  
 Boy-Rabbi, Israel's paragon.  
 And thoughtest thou such guest  
 Would in thy hall take up his rest ?  
 Would rushing life forget her laws,  
 Fate's glowing revolution pause ?  
 High omens ask diviner guess;  
 Not to be conned to tediousness.  
 And know my higher gifts unbind 230  
 The zone that girds the incarnate mind.  
 When the scanty shores are full  
 With Thought's perilous, whirling pool;  
 When frail Nature can no more,  
 Then the Spirit strikes the hour :  
 My servant Death, with solving rite,  
 Pours finite into infinite.  
 Wilt thou freeze love's tidal flow,  
 Whose streams through Nature circling go ?  
 Nail the wild star to its track 240  
 On the half-climbed zodiac ?  
 Light is light which radiates,  
 Blood is blood which circulates,  
 Life is life which generates,  
 And many-seeming life is one, —  
 Wilt thou transfix and make it none ?  
 Its onward force too starkly pent  
 In figure, bone and lineament ?  
 Wilt thou, uncalled, interrogate,  
 Talker ! the unreplying Fate ? 250  
 Nor see the genius of the whole  
 Ascendant in the private soul,  
 Beckon it when to go and come,  
 Self-announced its hour of doom ?

Fair the soul's recess and shrine,  
 Magic-built to last a season;  
 Masterpiece of love benign,  
 Fairer that expansive reason  
 Whose omen 't is, and sign.  
 Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know <sup>260</sup>  
 What rainbows teach, and sunsets show ?  
 Verdict which accumulates  
 From lengthening scroll of human fates,  
 Voice of earth to earth returned,  
 Prayers of saints that inly burned, —  
 Saying, *What is excellent,*  
*As God lives, is permanent ;*  
*Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain ;*  
*Heart's love will meet thee again.*  
 Revere the Maker; fetch thine eye <sup>270</sup>  
 Up to his style, and manners of the sky.  
 Not of adamant and gold  
 Built he heaven stark and cold;  
 No, but a nest of bending reeds,  
 Flowering grass and scented weeds;  
 Or like a traveller's fleeing tent,  
 Or bow above the tempest bent ;  
 Built of tears and sacred flames,  
 And virtue reaching to its aims ;  
 Built of furtherance and pursuing, <sup>280</sup>  
 Not of spent deeds, but of doing.  
 Silent rushes the swift Lord  
 Through ruined systems still restored,  
 Broomsowing, bleak and void to bless,  
 Plants with worlds the wilderness;  
 Waters with tears of ancient sorrow  
 Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.  
 House and tenant go to ground,  
 Lost in God, in Godhead found.'

1846.

TO J. W.<sup>1</sup>

SET not thy foot on graves;  
 Hear what wine and roses say ;  
 The mountain chase, the summer waves,  
 The crowded town, thy feet may well de-  
 lay.

Set not thy foot on graves;  
 Nor seek to unwind the shroud  
 Which charitable Time  
 And Nature have allowed  
 To wrap the errors of a sage sublime.

Set not thy foot on graves;  
 Care not to strip the dead

<sup>1</sup> To John Weiss, who had written a severe judgment of Coleridge.

Of his sad ornament,  
 His myrrh, and wine, and rings,

His sheet of lead,  
 And trophies buried:  
 Go, get them where he earned them  
 when alive;  
 As resolutely dig or dive.

Life is too short to waste  
 In critic peep or cynic bark,  
 Quarrel or reprimand:  
 'T will soon be dark;  
 Up! mind thine own aim, and  
 God speed the mark !

1846.

ODE <sup>2</sup>

INSCRIBED TO W. H. CHANNING

THOUGH loath to grieve  
 The evil time's sole patriot,  
 I cannot leave  
 My honeyed thought  
 For the priest's cant,  
 Or statesman's rant.

If I refuse  
 My study for their politique,  
 Which at the best is trick,  
 The angry Muse  
 Puts confusion in my brain.

10

But who is he that prates  
 Of the culture of mankind,  
 Of better arts and life?  
 Go, blindworm, go,  
 Behold the famous States  
 Harrying Mexico  
 With rifle and with knife !

<sup>2</sup> The circumstance which gave rise to this poem, though not known, can easily be inferred. Rev. William Henry Channing, nephew of the great Unitarian divine, a man most tender in his sympathies, with an apostle's zeal for right, had, no doubt, been urging his friend to join the brave band of men who were dedicating their lives to the destruction of human slavery in the United States. To these men Mr. Emerson gave honor and sympathy and active aid by word and presence on important occasions. He showed his colors from the first and spoke fearlessly on the subject in his lectures, but his method was the reverse of theirs, affirmative not negative; he knew his office and followed his genius. He said, 'I have quite other slaves to free than those negroes, to wit, imprisoned spirits, imprisoned thoughts.' (E. W. EMERSON.)

Or who, with accent bolder,  
Dare praise the freedom-loving mountain-  
eer ?

I found by thee, O rushing Contoocook !  
And in thy valleys, Agiochook !  
The jackals of the negro-holder.

The God who made New Hampshire  
Taunted the lofty land  
With little men; —  
Small bat and wren  
House in the oak: —  
If earth-fire cleave  
The upheaved land, and bury the folk,  
The southern crocodile would grieve.  
Virtue palters ; Right is hence;  
Freedom praised, but hid;  
Funeral eloquence  
Rattles the coffin-lid.

What boots thy zeal,  
O glowing friend,  
That would indignant rend  
The northland from the south ?  
Wherefore ? to what good end ?  
Boston Bay and Bunker Hill  
Would serve things still; —  
Things are of the snake.<sup>1</sup>

The horseman serves the horse,  
The neatherd serves the neat,  
The merchant serves the purse,  
The eater serves his meat;  
'T is the day of the chattel,  
Web to weave, and corn to grind;  
Things are in the saddle,  
And ride mankind.

There are two laws discrete,  
Not reconciled, —  
Law for man, and law for thing;  
The last builds town and fleet,  
But it runs wild,  
And doth the man unking.

'T is fit the forest fall,  
The steep be graded,  
The mountain tunnelled,  
The sand shaded,  
The orchard planted,  
The glebe tilled,

<sup>1</sup> Compare the essay on 'Self-Reliance': 'Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet.'

The prairie granted,  
The steamer built.

Let man serve law for man;  
Live for friendship, live for love,  
For truth's and harmony's behoof;  
The state may follow how it can,  
As Olympus follows Jove.

Yet do not I implore  
The wrinkled shopman to my sounding  
woods,

Nor bid the unwilling senator  
Ask votes of thrushes in the solitudes.  
Every one to his chosen work; —  
Foolish hands may mix and mar;  
Wise and sure the issues are.  
Round they roll till dark is light,  
Sex to sex, and even to odd; —

The over-god  
Who marries Right to Might,  
Who peoples, unpeoples, —

He who exterminates  
Races by stronger races,  
Black by white faces, —  
Knows to bring honey  
Out of the lion;

Grafts gentlest scion  
On pirate and Turk.

The Cossack eats Poland,  
Like stolen fruit ;

Her last noble is ruined,  
Her last poet mute :

Straight, into double band  
The victors divide;

Half for freedom strike and stand; —

The astonished Muse finds thousands at her  
side.

1846.

### MERLIN

THY trivial harp will never please  
Or fill my craving ear;  
Its chords should ring as blows the breeze,  
Free, peremptory, clear.

No jingling serenader's art,  
Nor tinkle of piano strings,  
Can make the wild blood start  
In its mystic springs.

The kingly bard  
Must smite the chords rudely and hard,  
As with hammer or with mace;  
That they may render back  
Artful thunder, which conveys

Secrets of the solar track,  
 Sparks of the supersolar blaze.  
 Merlin's blows are strokes of fate,  
 Chiming with the forest tone,  
 When boughs buffet boughs in the wood;  
 Chiming with the gasp and moan  
 Of the ice-imprisoned flood; 30  
 With the pulse of manly hearts;  
 With the voice of orators;  
 With the din of city arts;  
 With the cannonade of wars;  
 With the marches of the brave;  
 And prayers of might from martyrs' cave.

Great is the art,  
 Great be the manners, of the bard.  
 He shall not his brain encumber  
 With the coil of rhythm and number; 30  
 But, leaving rule and pale forethought,  
 He shall aye climb  
 For his rhyme.  
 'Pass in, pass in,' the angels say,  
 'In to the upper doors,  
 Nor count compartments of the floors,  
 But mount to paradise  
 By the stairway of surprise.'

Blameless master of the games,  
 King of sport that never shames, 40  
 He shall daily joy dispense  
 Hid in song's sweet influence.  
 Forms more cheerly live and go,  
 What time the subtle mind  
 Sings aloud the tune whereto  
 Their pulses beat,  
 And march their feet,  
 And their members are combined.

By Sybarites beguiled,  
 He shall no task decline. 50  
 Merlin's mighty line  
 Extremes of nature reconciled, —  
 Bereaved a tyrant of his will,  
 And made the lion mild.  
 Songs can the tempest still,  
 Scattered on the stormy air,  
 Mould the year to fair increase,  
 And bring in poetic peace.

He shall not seek to weave,  
 In weak, unhappy times, 60  
 Efficacious rhymes;  
 Wait his returning strength.  
 Bird that from nadir's floor  
 To the zenith's top can soar, —

The soaring orbit of the muse exceeds that  
 journey's length.  
 Nor profane affect to hit  
 Or compass that, by meddling wit,  
 Which only the propitious mind  
 Publishes when 't is inclined.  
 There are open hours 70  
 When the God's will sallies free,  
 And the dull idiot might see  
 The flowing fortunes of a thousand years;—  
 Sudden, at unawares,  
 Self-moved, fly-to the doors,  
 Nor sword of angels could reveal  
 What they conceal.

1845-46.

1846.

### THE WORLD-SOUL

THANKS to the morning light,  
 Thanks to the foaming sea,  
 To the uplands of New Hampshire,  
 To the green-haired forest free;  
 Thanks to each man of courage,  
 To the maids of holy mind,  
 To the boy with his games undaunted  
 Who never looks behind.

Cities of proud hotels,  
 Houses of rich and great, 10  
 Vice nestles in your chambers,  
 Beneath your roofs of slate.  
 It cannot conquer folly, —  
 Time-and-space-conquering steam, —  
 And the light-outspeeding telegraph  
 Bears nothing on its beam.

The politics are base;  
 The letters do not cheer;  
 And 't is far in the deeps of history,  
 The voice that speaketh clear. 20  
 Trade and the streets ensnare us,  
 Our bodies are weak and worn;  
 We plot and corrupt each other,  
 And we despoil the unborn.

Yet there in the parlor sits  
 Some figure of noble guise, —  
 Our angel, in a stranger's form,  
 Or woman's pleading eyes;  
 Or only a flashing sunbeam  
 In at the window-pane; 30  
 Or Music pours on mortals  
 Its beautiful disdain.

The inevitable morning  
 Finds them who in cellars be;  
 And be sure the all-loving Nature  
 Will smile in a factory.  
 Yon ridge of purple landscape,  
 Yon sky between the walls,  
 Hold all the hidden wonders  
 In scanty intervals. 40

Alas! the Sprite that haunts us  
 Deceives our rash desire;  
 It whispers of the glorious gods,  
 And leaves us in the mire.  
 We cannot learn the cipher  
 That's writ upon our cell;  
 Stars taunt us by a mystery  
 Which we could never spell.

If but one hero knew it,  
 The world would blush in flame; 50  
 The sage, till he hit the secret,  
 Would hang his head for shame.  
 Our brothers have not read it,  
 Not one has found the key;  
 And henceforth we are comforted, —  
 We are but such as they.<sup>1</sup>

Still, still the secret presses;  
 The nearing clouds draw down;  
 The crimson morning flames into  
 The fopperies of the town. 60  
 Within, without the idle earth,  
 Stars weave eternal rings;  
 The sun himself shines heartily,  
 And shares the joy he brings.

And what if Trade sow cities  
 Like shells along the shore,  
 And thatch with towns the prairie broad  
 With railways ironed o'er? —  
 They are but sailing foam-bells  
 Along Thought's causing stream, 70  
 And take their shape and sun-color  
 From him that sends the dream.

For Destiny never swerves  
 Nor yields to men the helm;  
 He shoots his thought, by hidden nerves,  
 Throughout the solid realm.  
 The patient Dæmon sits,  
 With roses and a shroud;

<sup>1</sup> There is something — our brothers over the sea do not know it or own it — . . . which is setting them all aside, and the whole world also, and planting itself forever and ever. (*Journal*, 1851.)

He has his way, and deals his gifts, —  
 But ours is not allowed. 80

He is no churl nor trifter,  
 And his viceroy is none, —  
 Love-without-weakness, —  
 Of Genius sire and son.  
 And his will is not thwarted;  
 The seeds of land and sea  
 Are the atoms of his body bright,  
 And his behest obey.

He serveth the servant,  
 The brave he loves amain; 90  
 He kills the cripple and the sick,  
 And straight begins again;  
 For gods delight in gods,  
 And thrust the weak aside;  
 To him who scorns their charities  
 Their arms fly open wide.

When the old world is sterile  
 And the ages are effete,  
 He will from wrecks and sediment  
 The fairer world complete. 100  
 He forbids to despair;  
 His cheeks mantle with mirth;  
 And the unimagined good of men  
 Is yearning at the birth.

Spring still makes spring in the mind  
 When sixty years are told;  
 Love wakes anew this throbbing heart,  
 And we are never old;  
 Over the winter glaciers  
 I see the summer glow, 110  
 And through the wild-piled snow-drift  
 The warm rosebuds below. 1846.

### HAMATREYA

BULKELEY, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Meriam, Flint<sup>2</sup>  
 Possessed the land which rendered to their  
 toil  
 Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool  
 and wood.  
 Each of these landlords walked amidst his  
 farm,  
 Saying, 'T is mine, my children's and my  
 name's.  
 How sweet the west wind sounds in my  
 own trees!

<sup>2</sup> All names of early settlers in the town of Concord.

How graceful climb those shadows on my hill !

I fancy these pure waters and the flags  
Know me, as does my dog: we sympathize;  
And, I affirm, my actions smack of the soil.' 10

Where are these men? Asleep beneath their grounds:

And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.

Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boys

Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs;

Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their feet

Clear of the grave.

They added ridge to valley, brook to pond,  
And sighed for all that bounded their domain;

'This suits me for a pasture; that's my park;

We must have clay, lime, gravel, granite-ledge, 20

And misty lowland, where to go for peat.

The land is well, — lies fairly to the south.

'T is good, when you have crossed the sea and back,

To find the sitfast acres where you left them.'

Ah ! the hot owner sees not Death, who adds

Him to his land, a lump of mould the more.  
Hear what the Earth says: —

#### EARTH-SONG

' Mine and yours;  
Mine, not yours.  
Earth endures; 30  
Stars abide —  
Shine down in the old sea;  
Old are the shores;  
But where are old men ?  
I who have seen much,  
Such have I never seen.

' The lawyer's deed  
Ran sure,  
In tail,  
To them, and to their heirs 40  
Who shall succeed,  
Without fail,  
Forevermore.

' Here is the land,  
Shaggy with wood,  
With its old valley,  
Mound and flood.  
But the heritors ? —  
Fled like the flood's foam.  
The lawyer, and the laws, 50  
And the kingdom,  
Clean swept herefrom.

' They called me theirs,  
Who so controlled me;  
Yet every one  
Wished to stay, and is gone,  
How am I theirs,  
If they cannot hold me,  
But I hold them ?'

When I heard the Earth-song 60  
I was no longer brave;  
My avarice cooled  
Like lust in the chill of the grave.

1846.

#### FORERUNNERS<sup>1</sup>

LONG I followed happy guides,  
I could never reach their sides;  
Their step is forth, and, ere the day  
Breaks up their leaguer, and away.  
Keen my sense, my heart was young,  
Right good-will my sinews strung,  
But no speed of mine avails  
To hunt upon their shining trails.  
On and away, their hasting feet  
Make the morning proud and sweet; 10  
Flowers they strew, — I catch the scent;  
Or tone of silver instrument  
Leaves on the wind melodious trace;  
Yet I could never see their face.  
On eastern hills I see their smokes,  
Mixed with mist by distant lochs.  
I met many travellers  
Who the road had surely kept;  
They saw not my fine revellers, — 19  
These had crossed them while they slept.  
Some had heard their fair report,  
In the country or the court.  
Fleetest couriers alive  
Never yet could once arrive,

<sup>1</sup> Compare Lowell's 'Envoi, To the Muse,' and Whittier's 'The Vanishers;' and also, in Emerson's essay on 'Nature' (*Essays, Second Series*), the third paragraph from the end, beginning 'Quite analogous to the deceits in life.'



As they went or they returned,  
 At the house where these sojourned.  
 Sometimes their strong speed they slacken,  
 Though they are not overtaken;  
 In sleep their jubilant troop is near, —  
 I tuneful voices overhear; 30  
 It may be in wood or waste, —  
 At unawares 't is come and past.  
 Their near camp my spirit knows  
 By signs gracious as rainbows.  
 I thenceforward and long after  
 Listen for their harp-like laughter,  
 And carry in my heart, for days,  
 Peace that hallows rudest ways.

1846.

## GIVE ALL TO LOVE

GIVE all to love;  
 Obey thy heart;  
 Friends, kindred, days,  
 Estate, good-fame,  
 Plans, credit and the Muse, —  
 Nothing refuse.

'T is a brave master;  
 Let it have scope :  
 Follow it utterly,  
 Hope beyond hope : 10  
 High and more high  
 It dives into noon,  
 With wing unspent,  
 Untold intent;  
 But it is a god,  
 Knows its own path  
 And the outlets of the sky.

It was never for the mean;  
 It requireth courage stout.  
 Souls above doubt, 20  
 Valor unbending,  
 It will reward, —  
 They shall return  
 More than they were,  
 And ever ascending.

Leave all for love;  
 Yet, hear me, yet,  
 One word more thy heart behoved,  
 One pulse more of firm endeavor, —  
 Keep thee to-day, 30  
 To-morrow, forever,  
 Free as an Arab  
 Of thy beloved.

Cling with life to the maid;  
 But when the surprise,  
 First vague shadow of surmise  
 Flits across her bosom young,  
 Of a joy apart from thee,  
 Free be she, fancy-free;  
 Nor thou detain her vesture's hem, 40  
 Nor the palest rose she flung  
 From her summer diadem.

Though thou loved her as thyself,  
 As a self of purer clay,  
 Though her parting dims the day,  
 Stealing grace from all alive;  
 Heartily know,  
 When half-gods go,  
 The gods arrive.

1846.

THE DAY'S RATION<sup>1</sup>

WHEN I was born,  
 From all the seas of strength Fate filled a  
 chalice,  
 Saying, 'This be thy portion, child; this  
 chalice,  
 Less than a lily's, thou shalt daily draw  
 From my great arteries, — nor less, nor  
 more.' 10

All substances the cunning chemist Time  
 Melts down into that liquor of my life, —  
 Friends, foes, joys, fortunes, beauty and  
 disgust.

And whether I am angry or content,  
 Indebted or insulted, loved or hurt, 20

All he distils into sidereal wine  
 And brims my little cup; heedless, alas !  
 Of all he sheds how little it will hold,  
 How much runs over on the desert sands.  
 If a new Muse draw me with splendid ray,  
 And I uplift myself into its heaven,  
 The needs of the first sight absorb my  
 blood,

And all the following hours of the day  
 Drag a ridiculous age.

To-day, when friends approach, and every  
 hour 20

Brings book, or starbright scroll of genius,  
 The little cup will hold not a bead more,  
 And all the costly liquor runs to waste;

<sup>1</sup> Compare the essay on 'Montaigne,' in *Representative Men*: 'To each man is administered a single drop, a bead of dew of vital power, *per day*, — a cup as large as space, and one drop of the water of life in it.' See the whole passage.



Nor gives the jealous lord one diamond  
 drop  
 So to be husbanded for poorer days.  
 Why need I volumes, if one word suffice?  
 Why need I galleries, when a pupil's  
 draught  
 After the master's sketch fills and o'erfills  
 My apprehension? Why seek Italy,  
 Who cannot circumnavigate the sea<sup>30</sup>  
 Of thoughts and things at home, but still  
 adjourn  
 The nearest matters for a thousand days?<sup>1</sup>  
 1846.

## MEROPS

WHAT care I, so they stand the same, —  
 Things of the heavenly mind, —  
 How long the power to give them name  
 Tarries yet behind?

Thus far to-day your favors reach,  
 O fair, appeasing presences!  
 Ye taught my lips a single speech,  
 And a thousand silences.

Space grants beyond his fated road  
 No inch to the god of day;  
 And copious language still bestowed  
 One word, no more, to say.

1846.

## MUSKETAQUID

BECAUSE I was content with these poor  
 fields,  
 Low, open meads, slender and sluggish  
 streams,  
 And found a home in haunts which others  
 scorned,  
 The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,  
 And granted me the freedom of their  
 state,  
 And in their secret senate have prevailed  
 With the dear, dangerous lords that rule  
 our life,<sup>2</sup>  
 Made moon and planets parties to their  
 bond,  
 And through my rock-like, solitary wont  
 Shot million rays of thought and tender-  
 ness.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the poems 'Written at Rome' and 'Written in Naples,' with the notes on them; and compare also Whittier's 'To —,' and 'The Last Walk in Autumn.'

<sup>2</sup> Compare the poem 'Experience.'

For me, in showers, in sweeping showers,  
 the Spring  
 Visits the valley; — break away the  
 clouds, —  
 I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,  
 And loiter willing by yon loitering stream.  
 Sparrows far off, and nearer, April's bird,  
 Blue-coated, — flying before from tree to  
 tree,  
 Courageous sing a delicate overture  
 To lead the tardy concert of the year.  
 Onward and nearer rides the sun of May;  
 And wide around, the marriage of the  
 plants<sup>20</sup>  
 Is sweetly solemnized. Then flows amain  
 The surge of summer's beauty; dell and  
 crag,  
 Hollow and lake, hillside and pine arcade,  
 Are touched with genius. Yonder ragged  
 cliff  
 Has thousand faces in a thousand hours.  
 Beneath low hills, in the broad interval  
 Through which at will our Indian rivulet  
 Winds mindful still of sannup and of  
 squaw,  
 Whose pipe and arrow oft the plough un-  
 buries,  
 Here in pine houses built of new-fallen  
 trees,<sup>30</sup>  
 Supplanters of the tribe, the farmers dwell.  
 Traveller, to thee, perchance, a tedious  
 road,  
 Or, it may be, a picture; to these men,  
 The landscape is an armory of powers,  
 Which, one by one, they know to draw and  
 use.  
 They harness beast, bird, insect, to their  
 work;  
 They prove the virtues of each bed of  
 rock,  
 And, like the chemist 'mid his loaded jars,  
 Draw from each stratum its adapted use  
 To drug their crops or weapon their arts  
 withal.<sup>40</sup>  
 They turn the frost upon their chemic heap,  
 They set the wind to winnow pulse and  
 grain,  
 They thank the spring-flood for its fertile  
 slime,  
 And, on cheap summit-levels of the snow,  
 Slide with the sledge to inaccessible woods  
 O'er meadows bottomless. So, year by  
 year,  
 They fight the elements with elements

(That one would say, meadow and forest  
walked,  
Transmuted in these men to rule their like),  
And by the order in the field disclose 50  
The order regnant in the yeoman's brain.

What these strong masters wrote at large  
in miles,

I followed in small copy in my acre;  
For there's no rood has not a star above it;<sup>1</sup>  
The cordial quality of pear or plum  
Ascends as gladly in a single tree  
As in broad orchards resonant with bees;  
And every atom poises for itself,  
And for the whole. The gentle deities  
Showed me the lore of colors and of sounds,  
The innumerable tenements of beauty, 61  
The miracle of generative force,  
Far-reaching concords of astronomy  
Felt in the plants and in the punctual birds;  
Better, the linked purpose of the whole,  
And, chiefest prize, found I true liberty  
In the glad home plain-dealing Nature gave.  
The polite found me impolite; the great  
Would mortify me, but in vain; for still  
I am a willow of the wilderness, 70  
Loving the wind that bent me. All my hurts  
My garden spade can heal. A woodland  
walk,

A quest of river-grapes, a mocking thrush,  
A wild-rose, or rock-loving columbine,  
Salve my worst wounds.

For thus the wood-gods murmured in my  
ear:

'Dost love our manners? Canst thou silent  
lie?

Canst thou, thy pride forgot, like Nature  
pass

Into the winter night's extinguished mood?  
Canst thou shine now, then darkle, 80

And being latent, feel thyself no less?  
As, when the all-worshipped moon attracts  
the eye,

The river, hill, stems, foliage are obscure,  
Yet envies none, none are unenviable.'

1846.

## NATURE

A SUBTLE chain of countless rings  
The next unto the farthest brings;

<sup>1</sup> Over every chimney is a star; in every field is an oaken garland or a wreath of parsley, laurel or wheat-ears. Nature waits to decorate every child. (*Journal*, 1840.)

The eye reads omens where it goes,  
And speaks all languages the rose;  
And, striving to be man, the worm  
Mounts through all the spires of form.<sup>2</sup>  
1849.

DAYS<sup>3</sup>

DAUGHTERS of Time, the hypocritic Days,  
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,  
And marching single in an endless file,  
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.  
To each they offer gifts after his will,  
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds  
them all.

I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,  
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily  
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day  
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,  
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

1851?

1857.

TWO RIVERS<sup>4</sup>

THY summer voice, Musketaquit,  
Repeats the music of the rain;

<sup>3</sup> Prefixed to Emerson's 'Nature,' in the second edition (1849), ten years before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Emerson's expression in prose of the same idea in his 'Works and Days': 'The days are ever divine, as to the first Aryans. They come and go like muffled and veiled figures, sent from a distant friendly party; but they say nothing, and if we do not use the gifts they bring, they carry them as silently away.' See Holmes's comparison of this passage with the poem, as typical of the essential differences between prose and poetry, in his *Life of Emerson*, pp. 310-314.

Lowell calls this poem 'as limpid and complete as a Greek epigram.' (*Life of Lowell*, vol. I, p. 414.)

<sup>4</sup> The *Journal* of 1856 shows the 'Two Rivers,' perhaps the most musical of his poems, as the thought first came to him by the river-bank and was then brought into form.

'Thy voice is sweet, Musketaquit, and repeats the music of the rain, but sweeter is the silent stream which flows even through thee, as thou through the land.'

'Thou art shut in thy banks, but the stream I love flows in thy water, and flows through rocks and through the air and through rays of light as well, and through darkness, and through men and women.'

'I hear and see the inundation and the eternal spending of the stream in winter and in summer, in men and animals, in passion and thought. Happy are they who can hear it.'

'I see thy brimming, eddying stream  
And thy enchantment.  
For thou changest every rock in thy bed  
Into a gem.  
All is opal and agate,  
And at will thou pavest with diamonds;  
Take them away from the stream  
And they are poor, shreds and flints.  
So is it with me to-day.'

(E. W. Emerson, *Emerson in Concord*, pp. 232-233).

But sweeter rivers pulsing flit  
Through thee, as thou through Concord  
Plain.

Thou in thy narrow banks art pent:  
The stream I love unbounded goes  
Through flood and sea and firmament;  
Through light, through life, it forward flows.

I see the inundation sweet,  
I hear the spending of the stream  
Through years, through men, through Na-  
ture fleet,  
Through love and thought, through power  
and dream.

Musketaquit, a goblin strong,  
Of shard and flint makes jewels gay;  
They lose their grief who hear his song,  
And where he winds is the day of day.

So forth and brighter fares my stream, —  
Who drink it shall not thirst again;  
No darkness stains its equal gleam  
And ages drop in it like rain.

1856-57.

1858.

### BRAHMA<sup>1</sup>

If the red slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

<sup>1</sup> This simple and condensed figurative statement of one of the commonplaces of any idealistic philosophy, whether Hindu, Platonist, Berkeleyan, or Hegelian, greatly astonished the matter-of-fact Americans of 1857, and aroused more ridicule and parody than any other of Emerson's poems. J. T. Trowbridge describes its effect as follows: "It was more talked about and puzzled over and parodied than any other poem of sixteen lines published within my recollection. "What does it mean?" was the question readers everywhere asked; and if one had the reputation of seeing a little way into the Concord philosophy, he was liable at any time to be stopped on the street by some perplexed inquirer, who would draw him into the nearest doorway, produce a crumpled newspaper clipping from the recesses of a waistcoat pocket, and, with knitted brows, exclaim, "Here! you think you understand Emerson; now tell me what all this is about, — *If the red slayer think he slays*," and so forth." (Quoted in Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. i, p. 415.)

Somewhat wiser was the little school-girl in the story vouched for by Mr. E. W. Emerson. She "was bidden by her teacher to learn some verses of Emerson. Next day she recited "Brahma." The astonished teacher asked why she chose that poem. The child answered that she tried several, but could n't understand them at all, so learned this one, "for it was so easy. *It just means 'God everywhere.'*"

Lowell wrote to Emerson after the poem had appeared in the first number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, of which

Far or forgot to me is near;  
Shadow and sunlight are the same;  
The vanished gods to me appear;  
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;  
When me they fly, I am the wings;  
I am the doubter and the doubt,  
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,  
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;  
But thou, meek lover of the good!  
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.  
1857.

### ODE

SUNG IN THE TOWN HALL, CONCORD,  
JULY 4, 1857

O TENDERLY the haughty day  
Fills his blue urn with fire;  
One morn is in the mighty heaven,  
And one in our desire.

The cannon booms from town to town,  
Our pulses beat not less,  
The joy-bells chime their tidings down,  
Which children's voices bless.

For He that flung the broad blue fold  
O'er-mantling land and sea,  
One third part of the sky unrolled  
For the banner of the free.

The men are ripe of Saxon kind  
To build an equal state, —  
To take the statute from the mind  
And make of duty fate.

Lowell was editor: "You have seen, no doubt, how the Philistines have been parodying your "Brahma," and showing how they still believe in their special god Baal, and are unable to arrive at a conception of an omnipresent Deity. . . . Let me thank you in especial for one line in "Brahma," which abides with me as an intimate —

"When me they fly, I am the wings.

You have crammed meaning there with an hydraulic press.' It is this condensation of meaning which makes the great effectiveness of the poem, and also its difficulty, if difficulty there be.

The direct source of this particular expression of Emerson's idealism seems to be Krishna's song in the Bhagavat-Gita, which in Edwin Arnold's translation is as follows: —

He who shall say, 'Lo! I have slain a man,'  
He who shall think, 'Lo! I am slain!' those both  
Know naught! Life cannot slay. Life is not slain!

United States! the ages plead, —  
 Present and Past in under-song, —  
 Go put your creed into your deed,  
 Nor speak with double tongue. 20

For sea and land don't understand,  
 Nor skies without a frown  
 See rights for which the one hand fights  
 By the other cloven down.

Be just at home; then write your scroll  
 Of honor o'er the sea,  
 And bid the broad Atlantic roll,  
 A ferry of the free.

And henceforth there shall be no chain,  
 Save underneath the sea 30  
 The wires shall murmur through the main  
 Sweet songs of liberty.

The conscious stars accord above,  
 The waters wild below,  
 And under, through the cable wove,  
 Her fiery errands go.

For He that worketh high and wise,  
 Nor pauses in his plan,  
 Will take the sun out of the skies  
 Ere freedom out of man. 40  
 1857. 1857.

### SEASHORE<sup>1</sup>

I HEARD or seemed to hear the chiding Sea  
 Say, Pilgrim, why so late and slow to come?

<sup>1</sup> In July, 1857, Mr. Emerson, induced by Dr. Bartol, took his family to spend two weeks at Pigeon Cove, on Cape Ann. The day after our return to Concord, he came into our mother's room, where we were all sitting, with his journal in his hand, and said, 'I came in yesterday from walking on the rocks and wrote down what the sea had said to me; and to-day, when I open my book, I find it all reads as blank verse, with scarcely a change.'

Here is the passage from that journal, as he read it to us: July 23. 'Returned from Pigeon Cove, where we have made acquaintance with the sea, for seven days. "It is a noble, friendly power, and seemed to say to me, Why so late and slow to come to me? Am I not here always, thy proper summer home? Is not my voice thy needful music; my breath thy healthful climate in the heats; my touch thy cure? Was ever building like my terraces? Was ever couch so magnificent as mine? Lie down on my warm ledges and learn that a very little hut is all you need. I have made this architecture superfluous, and it is paltry beside mine. Here are twenty Romes and Ninevehs and Karnaks in ruins together, obelisk and pyramid and Giant's Causeway; here they all are prostrate or half piled. And behold the sea, the opaline, plentiful and strong, yet beautiful as the rose or the rainbow, full of food, nourisher of men, purger of the world, creating a sweet climate and in its

Am I not always here, thy summer home?  
 Is not my voice thy music, morn and eve?  
 My breath thy healthful climate in the heats,  
 My touch thy antidote, my bay thy bath?  
 Was ever building like my terraces?  
 Was ever couch magnificent as mine?  
 Lie on the warm rock-ledges, and there learn  
 A little hut suffices like a town. 10  
 I make your sculptured architecture vain,  
 Vain beside mine. I drive my wedges home,  
 And carve the coastwise mountain into caves.  
 Lo! here is Rome and Nineveh and Thebes,  
 Karnak and Pyramid and Giant's Stairs  
 Half piled or prostrate; and my newest  
 slab  
 Older than all thy race.

Behold the Sea,  
 The opaline, the plentiful and strong,  
 Yet beautiful as is the rose in June,  
 Fresh as the trickling rainbow of July; 20  
 Sea full of food, the nourisher of kinds,  
 Purger of earth, and medicine of men;  
 Creating a sweet climate by my breath,  
 Washing out harms and griefs from memory,  
 And, in my mathematic ebb and flow,  
 Giving a hint of that which changes not.  
 Rich are the sea-gods: — who gives gifts  
 but they?  
 They grope the sea for pearls, but more  
 than pearls:  
 They pluck Force thence, and give it to the  
 wise.  
 For every wave is wealth to Dædalus, 30  
 Wealth to the cunning artist who can work  
 This matchless strength. Where shall he  
 find, O waves!  
 A load your Atlas shoulders cannot lift?

I with my hammer pounding evermore  
 The rocky coast, smite Andes into dust,  
 Strewing my bed, and, in another age,  
 Rebuild a continent of better men.  
 Then I unbar the doors: my paths lead out  
 The exodus of nations: I disperse  
 Men to all shores that front the hoary main.

I too have arts and sorceries; 41  
 Illusion dwells forever with the wave.  
 I know what spells are laid. Leave me to  
 deal

unchangeable ebb and flow, and in its beauty at a few furlongs, giving a hint of that which changes not, and is perfect.' (E. W. EMERSON, in the *Centenary Edition*.)

With credulous and imaginative man;  
For, though he scoop my water in his palm,  
A few rods off he deems it gems and clouds.  
Planting strange fruits and sunshine on the  
shore,

I make some coast alluring, some lone isle,  
To distant men, who must go there, or die.

**1857.**

**1867.**

# WALDEINSAMKEIT

**I DO not count the hours I spend  
In wandering by the sea;  
The forest is my loyal friend,  
Like God it useth me.**

In plains that room for shadows make  
Of skirting hills to lie,  
Bound in by streams which give and take  
Their colors from the sky;

Or on the mountain-crest sublime,  
Or down the oaken glade,  
O what have I to do with time ?  
For this the day was made.

**Cities of mortals woe-begone  
Fantastic care derides,  
But in the serious landscape lone  
Stern benefit abides.**

Sheen will tarnish, honey cloy,  
And merry is only a mask of sad,  
But, sober on a fund of joy,  
The woods at heart are glad.

There the great Planter plants  
Of fruitful worlds the grain,  
And with a million spells enchants  
The souls that walk in pain.

Still on the seeds of all he made  
The rose of beauty burns;  
Through times that wear and forms that  
fade,  
Immortal youth returns.

The black ducks mounting from the lake,  
The pigeon in the pines,  
The bittern's boom, a desert make  
Which no false art refines.

**Down in yon watery nook,  
Where bearded mists divide,**

**The gray old gods whom Chaos knew,  
The sires of Nature, hide.**

**Aloft, in secret veins of air,  
Blows the sweet breath of song,  
O, few to scale those uplands dare,  
Though they to all belong !**

See thou bring not to field or stone  
The fancies found in books;  
Leave authors' eyes, and fetch your own,  
To brave the landscape's looks.

Oblivion here thy wisdom is,  
Thy thrift, the sleep of cares;  
For a proud idleness like this  
Crowns all thy mean affairs.

**1857.**

**1858.**

## FRAGMENTS ON NATURE AND LIFE

# NATURE

DAILY the bending skies solicit man,  
The seasons chariot him from this exile,  
The rainbow hours bedeck his glowing  
wheels,  
The storm-winds urge the heavy weeks  
along,  
Suns haste to set, that so remoter lights  
Beckon the wanderer to his vaster home.

FOR Nature, true and like in every place,  
Will hint her secret in a garden patch,  
Or in lone corners of a doleful heath,  
As in the Andes watched by fleets at sea,  
Or the sky-piercing horns of Himmaleh;  
And, when I would recall the scenes I  
dreamed

On Adirondac steeps, I know  
Small need have I of Turner or Daguerre,  
Assured to find the token once again  
In silver lakes that unexhausted gleam  
And peaceful woods beside my cottage door.

**BUT never yet the man was found  
Who could the mystery expound,  
Though Adam, born when oaks were  
young,  
Endured, the Bible says, as long;**

10

20

20

But when at last the patriarch died  
The Gordian noose was still untied.  
He left, though goodly centuries old,  
Meek Nature's secret still untold.

ATOM from atom yawns as far  
As moon from earth, or star from star.

TEACH me your mood, O patient stars !  
Who climb each night the ancient sky,  
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,  
No trace of age, no fear to die.

THE sun athwart the cloud thought it no  
sin  
To use my land to put his rainbows in.

DAY by day for her darlings to her much  
she added more;  
In her hundred-gated Thebes every cham-  
ber was a door,  
A door to something grander, — loftier  
walls, and vaster floor.

SHE paints with white and red the moors  
To draw the nations out of doors.

#### NIGHT IN JUNE

I LEFT my dreary page and sallied forth,  
Received the fair inscriptions of the night;  
The moon was making amber of the world,  
Glittered with silver every cottage pane,  
The trees were rich, yet ominous with  
gloom.

The meadows broad  
From ferns and grapes and from the folded  
flowers  
Sent a nocturnal fragrance; harlot flies  
Flashed their small fires in air, or held their  
court  
In fairy groves of herds-grass.

BUT Nature whistled with all her winds,  
Did as she pleased and went her way.

#### LIFE

A TRAIN of gay and clouded days  
Dappled with joy and grief and praise,  
Beauty to fire us, saints to save,  
Escort us to a little grave.

No fate, save by the victim's fault, is low,  
For God hath writ all dooms magnificent,  
So guilt not traverses his tender will.

THIS shining moment is an edifice  
Which the Omnipotent cannot rebuild.

ROOMY Eternity  
Casts her schemes rarely,  
And an æon allows  
For each quality and part  
Of the multitudinous  
And many-chambered heart.

BE of good cheer, brave spirit; steadfastly  
Serve that low whisper thou hast served;  
for know,  
God hath a select family of sons  
Now scattered wide thro' earth, and each  
alone,  
Who are thy spiritual kindred, and each one  
By constant service to that inward law,  
Is weaving the sublime proportions  
Of a true monarch's soul. Beauty and  
strength,  
The riches of a spotless memory,  
The eloquence of truth, the wisdom got  
By searching of a clear and loving eye  
That seeth as God seeth, — these are their  
gifts ;  
And Time, who keeps God's word, brings  
on the day  
To seal the marriage of these minds with  
thine,  
Thine everlasting lovers. Ye shall be  
The salt of all the elements, world of the  
world.

#### LOVE

Asks nought his brother cannot give;  
Asks nothing, but does all receive.  
Love calls not to his aid events;

He to his wants can well suffice:  
 Asks not of others soft consents,  
 Nor kind occasion without eyes;  
 Nor plots to ope or bolt a gate,  
 Nor heeds Condition's iron walls, —  
 Where he goes, goes before him Fate;  
 Whom he uniteth, God installs;  
 Instant and perfect his access  
 To the dear object of his thought,  
 Though foes and land and seas between  
 Himself and his love intervene.

TELL men what they knew before;  
 Paint the prospect from their door.

HIM strong Genius urged to roam,  
 Stronger Custom brought him home.

THAT each should in his house abide,  
 Therefore was the world so wide.<sup>1</sup>

YES, sometimes to the sorrow-stricken  
 Shall his own sorrow seem impertinent,  
 A thing that takes no more root in the world  
 Than doth the traveller's shadow on the  
 rock.

#### REX

THE bard and mystic held me for their own,  
 I filled the dream of sad, poetic maids,  
 I took the friendly noble by the hand,  
 I was the trustee of the hand-cart man,  
 The brother of the fisher, porter, swain,  
 And these from the crowd's edge well  
 pleased beheld  
 The service done to me as done to them.

SHUN passion, fold the hands of thrift,  
 Sit still, and Truth is near:  
 Suddenly it will uplift  
 Your eyelids to the sphere:

<sup>1</sup> A common thought with Emerson (see 'Written in Naples,' 'Written at Rome,' 'The Day's Ration,' and the essay 'Self-Reliance'), but, as here expressed, evidently meant for a direct answer to the last words of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, so often quoted by Carlyle: —

To give space for wandering is it  
 That the world was made so wide.

Wait a little, you shall see  
 The portraiture of things to be.

OH, what is Heaven but the fellowship  
 Of minds that each can stand against the  
 world  
 By its own meek and incorruptible will?

ON bravely through the sunshine and the  
 showers!  
 Time hath his work to do and we have ours.  
 1830-60. 1883.

#### FRAGMENTS ON THE POET AND THE POETIC GIFT

THE gods talk in the breath of the woods,  
 They talk in the shaken pine,  
 And fill the long reach of the old seashore  
 With dialogue divine;  
 And the poet who overhears  
 Some random word they say  
 Is the fated man of men  
 Whom the ages must obey.

THE sun set, but set not his hope: —  
 Stars rose, his faith was earlier up:  
 Fixed on the enormous galaxy,  
 Deeper and older seemed his eye,  
 And matched his sufferance sublime  
 The taciturnity of Time.<sup>2</sup>  
 He spoke, and words more soft than rain  
 Brought the Age of Gold again:  
 His action won such reverence sweet  
 As hid all measure of the feat.

THE Dervish whined to Said,  
 'Thou didst not tarry while I prayed.  
 Beware the fire that Eblis burned.'  
 But Saadi coldly thus returned,  
 'Once with manlike love and fear  
 I gave thee for an hour my ear,  
 I kept the sun and stars at bay,  
 And love, for words thy tongue could say.  
 I cannot sell my heaven again  
 For all that rattles in thy brain.'

<sup>2</sup> The first six lines were originally written as part of 'The Poet,' but were first printed, with the four following, as motto to the essay on 'Character'.



THE free winds told him what they knew,  
 Discoursed of fortune as they blew;  
 Omens and signs that filled the air  
 To him authentic witness bare;  
 The birds brought auguries on their wings,  
 And carolled undeceiving things  
 Him to beckon, him to warn;  
 Well might then the poet scorn  
 To learn of scribe or courier  
 Things writ in vaster character;  
 And on his mind at dawn of day  
 Soft shadows of the evening lay.

PALE genius roves alone,  
 No scout can track his way,  
 None credits him till he have shown  
 His diamonds to the day.

Not his the feaster's wine,  
 Nor land, nor gold, nor power,  
 By want and pain God screeneth him  
 Till his elected hour.

Go, speed the stars of Thought  
 On to their shining goals: —  
 The sower scatters broad his seed,  
 The wheat thou strew'st be souls.

FOR thought, and not praise;  
 Thought is the wages  
 For which I sell days,  
 Will gladly sell ages  
 And willing grow old  
 Deaf, and dumb, and blind, and cold,  
 Melting matter into dreams,  
 Panoramas which I saw  
 And whatever glows or seems  
 Into substance, into Law.

A DULL uncertain brain,  
 But gifted yet to know  
 That God has cherubim who go  
 Singing an immortal strain,  
 Immortal here below.  
 I know the mighty bards,  
 I listen when they sing,  
 And now I know  
 The secret store  
 Which these explore  
 When they with torch of genius pierce  
 The tenfold clouds that cover

The riches of the universe  
 From God's adoring lover.  
 And if to me it is not given  
 To fetch one ingot thence  
 Of the unfading gold of Heaven  
 His merchants may dispense,  
 Yet well I know the royal mine,  
 And know the sparkle of its ore,  
 Know Heaven's truth from lies that  
 shine —  
 Explored they teach us to explore.

FOR Fancy's gift  
 Can mountains lift;  
 The Muse can knit  
 What is past, what is done,  
 With the web that's just begun;  
 Making free with time and size,  
 Dwindles here, there magnifies,  
 Swells a rain-drop to a tun;  
 So to repeat  
 No word or feat  
 Crowds in a day the sum of ages,  
 And blushing Love outwits the sages.

TRY the might the Muse affords  
 And the balm of thoughtful words;  
 Bring music to the desolate;  
 Hang roses on the stony fate.

AND as the light divides the dark  
 Through with living swords,  
 So shalt thou pierce the distant age  
 With adamant words.

I FRAMED his tongue to music,  
 I armed his hand with skill,  
 I moulded his face to beauty  
 And his heart the throne of Will.

THAT book is good  
 Which puts me in a working mood.<sup>1</sup>  
 Unless to Thought is added Will,  
 Apollo is an imbecile.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the essay 'Inspiration': 'Every book is good to read which sets the reader in a working mood.' . . . 'Fact-books, if the facts be well and thoroughly told, are much more nearly allied to poetry than many books that are written in rhyme.'



What parts, what gems, what colors shine, —  
Ah, but I miss the grand design.

FOR what need I of book or priest,  
Or sibyl from the mummied East,  
When every star is Bethlehem star?  
I count as many as there are  
Cinquefoils or violets in the grass,  
So many saints and saviors,  
So many high behaviors  
Salute the bard who is alive  
And only sees what he doth give.

COIN the day-dawn into lines  
In which its proper splendor shines;  
Coin the moonlight into verse  
Which all its marvel shall rehearse,  
Chasing with words fast-flowing things;  
nor try  
To plant thy shrivelled pedantry  
On the shoulders of the sky.

His instant thought a poet spoke,  
And filled the age his fame;  
An inch of ground the lightning strook  
But lit the sky with flame.<sup>1</sup>

1840-1860.

1883.

## QUATRAINS AND TRANSLATIONS

### POET

EVER the Poet *from* the land  
Steers his bark and trims his sail;  
Right out to sea his courses stand,  
New worlds to find in pinnace frail.

### POET

To clothe the fiery thought  
In simple words succeeds,  
For still the craft of genius is  
To mask a king in weeds.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare Emerson's 'Address at the Hundredth Anniversary of the Concord Fight: 'The thunderbolt falls on an inch of ground, but the light of it fills the horizon.'

<sup>2</sup> Compare the essay on 'Beauty,' in *The Conduct of Life*: 'This art of omission is a chief secret of power, and, in general, it is a proof of high culture to say the greatest matters in the simplest way.'

### BOTANIST

Go thou to thy learned task,  
I stay with the flowers of Spring:  
Do thou of the Ages ask  
What me the Hours will bring.

### GARDENER

TRUE Brahmin, in the morning meadows  
wet,  
Expound the Vedas of the violet,  
Or, hid in vines, peeping through many a  
loop,  
See the plum redden, and the beurre stooop.<sup>3</sup>

### NORTHMAN

THE gale that wrecked you on the sand,  
It helped my rowers to row;  
The storm is my best galley hand  
And drives me where I go.

### FROM ALCUIN

THE sea is the road of the bold,  
Frontier of the wheat-sown plains,  
The pit wherein the streams are rolled  
And fountain of the rains.

### EXCELSIOR

OVER his head were the maple buds,  
And over the tree was the moon,  
And over the moon were the starry studs  
That drop from the angels' shoon.  
(May 1, 1838.)

### BORROWING

(FROM THE FRENCH)

SOME of your hurts you have cured,  
And the sharpest you still have survived,  
But what torments of grief you endured  
From evils which never arrived!

### NATURE

BOON Nature yields each day a brag which  
we now first behold,  
And trains us on to slight the new, as if it  
were the old:

<sup>3</sup> Go to the forest, if God has made thee a poet, and make thy life clean and fragrant as thy office.

True Brahmin, in the morning meadows wet,  
Expound the Vedas in the violet.

Thy love must be thy art. . . . Nature also must teach thee rhetoric. She can teach thee not only to speak truth, but to speak it truly. (*Journal*, July, 1840.)

But blest is he, who, playing deep, yet haply  
asks not why,  
Too busied with the crowded hour to fear  
to live or die.

## NATURE IN LEASTS

As sings the pine-tree in the wind,  
So sings in the wind a sprig of the pine;  
Her strength and soul has laughing France  
Shed in each drop of wine.

## CLIMACTERIC

I AM not wiser for my age,  
Nor skilful by my grief;  
Life loiters at the book's first page, —  
Ah! could we turn the leaf.

## HERI, CRAS, HODIE

SHINES the last age, the next with hope is  
seen,  
To-day slinks poorly off unmarked between:  
Future or Past no richer secret folds,  
O friendless Present! than thy bosom holds.

## SACRIFICE

THOUGH love repine, and reason chafe,  
There came a voice without reply, —  
'T is man's perdition to be safe,  
When for the truth he ought to die.' <sup>1</sup>

CASELLA <sup>2</sup>

TEST of the poet is knowledge of love,  
For Eros is older than Saturn or Jove;  
Never was poet, of late or of yore,  
Who was not tremulous with love-lore.

<sup>1</sup> This quatrain was chosen by James Russell Lowell to be inscribed on the simple monument at Soldiers' Field in Cambridge, which was given as an athletic ground by Col. Henry Lee Higginson, in memory of his classmates and friends, Charles Russell Lowell, James Jackson Lowell, Robert Gould Shaw, James Savage, Jr., Edward Barry Dalton, and Stephen George Perkins, who died in the war or soon after.

Compare Emerson's two addresses referred to in the note on 'Voluntaries.' The best commentary, however, is Colonel Higginson's story of the lives and deaths of his comrades, in his addresses on the presentation of Soldiers' Field, 1890, and on Robert Gould Shaw, 1897 (*Four Addresses*, Boston, 1902.)

<sup>2</sup> A famous singer of Florence. Dante tells of meeting him (*Purgatory*, Canto II, lines 76-133) and begging him to sing: 'If a new law take not from thee memory or practice of the song of love which was wont to quiet all my longings, may it please thee therewith somewhat to comfort my soul.' (Norton's Translation.) Casella then sings Dante's *Amor che nella mente mi ragiona* ('Love, that within my mind discourses with me'), 'so sweetly, that the sweetness still within me sounds. My Master, and I, and the folk who were with

## SHAKSPEARE

I SEE all human wits  
Are measured but a few;  
Unmeasured still my Shakspeare sits,  
Lone as the blessed Jew.

## HAFIZ

HER passions the shy violet  
From Hafiz never hides;  
Love-longings of the raptured bird  
The bird to him confides.

## AAAKPTN NEMONTAI ALONA

'A NEW commandment,' said the smiling  
Muse,  
'I give my darling son, Thou shalt not  
preach'; —  
Luther, Fox, Behmen, Swedenborg, grew  
pale,  
And, on the instant, rosier clouds upbore  
Hafiz and Shakspeare with their shining  
choirs.

## FRIENDSHIP

THOU foolish Hafiz! Say, do churls  
Know the worth of Oman's pearls?  
Give the gem which dims the moon  
To the noblest, or to none.

ON prince or bride no diamond stone  
Half so gracious ever shone,  
As the light of enterprise  
Beaming from a young man's eyes.

UNBAR the door, since thou the Opener art,  
Show me the forward way, since thou art  
guide,  
I put no faith in pilot or in chart,  
Since they are transient, and thou dost  
abide.

IF Thought unlock her mysteries,  
If Friendship on me smile,  
I walk in marble galleries,  
I talk with kings the while.

1850-60?

1883.

him, appeared so content as if naught else could touch  
the mind of any.'

Milton speaks of Casella in his 'Sonnet to Mr. Henry  
Lawes': —

Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher  
Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,  
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

THE BOHEMIAN HYMN<sup>1</sup>

In many forms we try  
To utter God's infinity,  
But the boundless hath no form,  
And the Universal Friend  
Doth as far transcend  
An angel as a worm.

The great Idea baffles wit  
Language falters under it,  
It leaves the learned in the lurch;  
Nor art, nor power, nor toil can find  
The measure of the eternal Mind,  
Nor hymn, nor prayer, nor church.

1883.

## PAN

O WHAT are heroes, prophets, men,  
But pipes through which the breath of Pan  
doth blow

A momentary music. Being's tide  
Swells hitherward, and myriads of forms  
Live, robed with beauty, painted by the  
sun;

Their dust, pervaded by the nerves of God,  
Throbs with an overmastering energy  
Knowing and doing. Ebbs the tide, they  
lie

White hollow shells upon the desert shore,  
But not the less the eternal wave rolls on  
To animate new millions, and exhale  
Races and planets, its enchanted foam.<sup>2</sup>

1883.

## THE ENCHANTER

In the deep heart of man a poet dwells  
Who all the day of life his summer story  
tells;

Scatters on every eye dust of his spells,  
Scent, form and color; to the flowers and  
shells

Wins the believing child with wondrous  
tales;

Touches a cheek with colors of romance,  
And crowds a history into a glance;

<sup>1</sup> Compare the essay on 'Plato:' 'Plato apprehended the cardinal facts. He could prostrate himself on the earth and cover his eyes whilst he adored that which cannot be numbered, or gauged, or known, or named . . . He even stood ready, as in the Parmenides, to demonstrate . . . that this Being exceeded the limits of intellect. No man ever more fully acknowledged the Ineffable.'

<sup>2</sup> Compare Bryant's 'Flood of Years.'

Gives beauty to the lake and fountain,  
Spies oversea the fires of the mountain;  
When thrushes ope their throat, 't is he  
that sings,

And he that paints the oriole's fiery wings.  
The little Shakspeare in the maiden's  
heart

Makes Romeo of a plough-boy on his cart;  
Opens the eye to Virtue's starlike meed  
And gives persuasion to a gentle deed.

1883.

## EROS

THEY put their finger on their lip,  
The Powers above:  
The seas their islands clip,  
The moons in ocean dip,  
They love, but name not love.

1883.

MUSIC<sup>3</sup>

LET me go where'er I will,  
I hear a sky-born music still:  
It sounds from all things old,  
It sounds from all things young,  
From all that's fair, from all that's foul,  
Peals out a cheerful song.

It is not only in the rose,  
It is not only in the bird,  
Not only where the rainbow glows,  
Nor in the song of woman heard,  
But in the darkest, meanest things  
There alway, alway something sings.

'T is not in the high stars alone,  
Nor in the cup of budding flowers,  
Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,  
Nor in the bow that smiles in showers,  
But in the mud and scum of things  
There alway, alway something sings.

1883.

THE TITMOUSE<sup>4</sup>

You shall not be overbold  
When you deal with arctic cold,

<sup>3</sup> In 1883 this poem was printed among the 'Fragments on Nature and Life,' in an Appendix. It first appears as a separate poem, with title, in the *Centenary Edition* of 1904.

<sup>4</sup> The snow still lies even with the tops of the walls across the Walden road, and, this afternoon, I waded through the woods to my grove. A chickadee came out to greet me, flew about within reach of my hands,

As late I found my lukewarm blood  
 Chilled wading in the snow-choked wood.  
 How should I fight? my foeman fine  
 Has million arms to one of mine:  
 East, west, for aid I looked in vain,  
 East, west, north, south, are his domain.  
 Miles off, three dangerous miles, is home;  
 Must borrow his winds who there would  
 come. 10

Up and away for life! be fleet! —  
 The frost-king ties my fumbling feet,  
 Sings in my ears, my hands are stones,  
 Curdles the blood to the marble bones,  
 Tugs at the heart-strings, numbs the sense,  
 And hems in life with narrowing fence.  
 Well, in this broad bed lie and sleep, —  
 The punctual stars will vigil keep, —  
 Embalmed by purifying cold;  
 The winds shall sing their dead-march old, 20  
 The snow is no ignoble shroud,  
 The moon thy mourner, and the cloud.

Softly, — but this way fate was pointing,  
 'T was coming fast to such anointing,  
 When piped a tiny voice hard by,  
 Gay and polite, a cheerful cry,  
*Chic-chic-a-dee-dee!* saucy note  
 Out of sound heart and merry throat,  
 As if it said, 'Good day, good sir!  
 Fine afternoon, old passenger! 30  
 Happy to meet you in these places,  
 Where January brings few faces.'

This poet, though he live apart,  
 Moved by his hospitable heart,  
 Sped, when I passed his sylvan fort,  
 To do the honors of his court,  
 As fits a feathered lord of land;  
 Flew near, with soft wing grazed my  
 hand,

perched on the nearest bough, flew down into the snow,  
 rested there two seconds, then up again just over my  
 head, and busied himself on the dead bark. I whis-  
 tled to him through my teeth, and (I think, in re-  
 sponse) he began at once to whistle. I promised him  
 crumbs, and must not go again to these woods without  
 them. I suppose the best food to carry would be the  
 meat of shagbarks or Castile nuts. Thoreau tells me  
 that they are very sociable with wood-choppers, and  
 will take crumbs from their hands. (*Journal*, March  
 3, 1862.)

Compare Holmes's characteristic comment on this  
 poem, in his *Pages from an Old Volume of Life*: 'The  
 moral of the poem is as heroic as the verse is exquisite;  
 but we must not forget the non-conducting quality of  
 fur and feathers, and remember, if we are at all deli-  
 cate, to go

Wrapped in our virtue, and a good surtout,  
 by way of additional security.'

Hopped on the bough, then, darting low,  
 Prints his small impress on the snow, 40  
 Shows feats of his gymnastic play,  
 Head downward, clinging to the spray.

Here was this atom in full breath,  
 Hurling defiance at vast death;  
 This scrap of valor just for play  
 Fronts the north-wind in waistcoat gray,  
 As if to shame my weak behavior;  
 I greeted loud my little savior,  
 'You pet! what dost here? and what for?  
 In these woods, thy small Labrador, 50  
 At this pinch, wee San Salvador!  
 What fire burns in that little chest  
 So frolic, stout and self-possessed?  
 Henceforth I wear no stripe but thine;  
 Ashes and jet all hues outshine.  
 Why are not diamonds black and gray,  
 To ape thy dare-devil array?  
 And I affirm, the spacious North  
 Exists to draw thy virtue forth.  
 I think no virtue goes with size; 60  
 The reason of all cowardice  
 Is, that men are overgrown,  
 And, to be valiant, must come down  
 To the titmouse dimension.'

'T is good will makes intelligence,  
 And I began to catch the sense  
 Of my bird's song: 'Live out of doors  
 In the great woods, on prairie floors.  
 I dine in the sun; when he sinks in the sea, 70  
 I too have a hole in a hollow tree;  
 And I like less when Summer beats  
 With stifling beams on these retreats,  
 Than noontide twilights which snow makes.  
 With tempest of the blinding flakes.  
 For well the soul, if stout within,  
 Can arm impregnably the skin;  
 And polar frost my frame defied,  
 Made of the air that blows outside.'

With glad remembrance of my debt,  
 I homeward turn; farewell, my pet! 80  
 When here again thy pilgrim comes,  
 He shall bring store of seeds and crumbs.  
 Doubt not, so long as earth has bread,  
 Thou first and foremost shalt be fed;  
 The Providence that is most large  
 Takes hearts like thine in special charge,  
 Helps who for their own need are strong,  
 And the sky doats on cheerful song.  
 Henceforth I prize thy wiry chant  
 O'er all that mass and minster vaunt; 90

For men mis-hear thy call in Spring,  
 As 't would accost some frivolous wing,  
 Crying out of the hazel copse, *Phe-be!*  
 And, in winter, *Chic-a-dee-dee!*  
 I think old Cæsar must have heard  
 In northern Gaul my dauntless bird,  
 And, echoed in some frosty wold,  
 Borrowed thy battle-numbers bold.  
 And I will write our annals new,  
 And thank thee for a better clew, 100  
 I, who dreamed not when I came here  
 To find the antidote of fear,  
 Now hear thee say in Roman key,  
*Pæan! Veni, vidi, vici.*

1862.

1862.

## BOSTON HYMN

READ IN MUSIC HALL, JANUARY 1, 1863<sup>1</sup>

THE word of the Lord by night  
 To the watching Pilgrims came,  
 As they sat by the seaside,  
 And filled their hearts with flame.

God said, I am tired of kings,  
 I suffer them no more;  
 Up to my ear the morning brings  
 The outrage of the poor.

Think ye I made this ball  
 A field of havoc and war, 10  
 Where tyrants great and tyrants small  
 Might harry the weak and poor?

My angel, — his name is Freedom, —  
 Choose him to be your king;  
 He shall cut pathways east and west  
 And fend you with his wing.

Lo! I uncover the land  
 Which I hid of old time in the West,  
 As the sculptor uncovers the statue  
 When he has wrought his best; 20

I show Columbia, of the rocks  
 Which dip their foot in the seas  
 And soar to the air-borne flocks  
 Of clouds and the boreal fleece.

I will divide my goods;  
 Call in the wretch and slave:

<sup>1</sup> The day when the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. The Proclamation was issued on September 22, 1862.

None shall rule but the humble,  
 And none but Toil shall have.

I will have never a noble,  
 No lineage counted great; 30  
 Fishers and choppers and ploughmen  
 Shall constitute a state.

Go, cut down trees in the forest  
 And trim the straightest boughs;  
 Cut down trees in the forest  
 And build me a wooden house.

Call the people together,  
 The young men and the sires,  
 The digger in the harvest-field,  
 Hireling and him that hires; 40

And here in a pine state-house  
 They shall choose men to rule  
 In every needful faculty,  
 In church and state and school.

Lo, now! if these poor men  
 Can govern the land and sea  
 And make just laws below the sun,  
 As planets faithful be.

And ye shall succor men;  
 'Tis nobleness to serve; 50  
 Help them who cannot help again:  
 Beware from right to swerve.

I break your bonds and masterships,  
 And I unchain the slave:  
 Free be his heart and hand henceforth  
 As wind and wandering wave.

I cause from every creature  
 His proper good to flow:  
 As much as he is and doeth,  
 So much he shall bestow. 60

But, laying hands on another  
 To coin his labor and sweat,  
 He goes in pawn to his victim  
 For eternal years in debt.

To-day unbind the captive,  
 So only are ye unbound;  
 Lift up a people from the dust,  
 Trump of their rescue, sound!

Pay ransom to the owner  
 And fill the bag to the brim. 70

Who is the owner ? The slave is owner,  
And ever was. Pay him.

O North ! give him beauty for rags,  
And honor, O South ! for his shame;  
Nevada ! coin thy golden crags  
With Freedom's image and name.

Up ! and the dusky race  
That sat in darkness long, —  
Be swift their feet as antelopes,  
And as behemoth strong.

Come, East and West and North,  
By races, as snow-flakes,  
And carry my purpose forth,  
Which neither halts nor shakes.

My will fulfilled shall be,  
For, in daylight or in dark,  
My thunderbolt has eyes to see  
His way home to the mark.

1862.

1863.

## VOLUNTARIES

## I

Low and mournful be the strain,  
Haughty thought be far from me;  
Tones of penitence and pain,  
Moanings of the tropic sea;  
Low and tender in the cell  
Where a captive sits in chains,  
Crooning ditties treasured well  
From his Afric's torrid plains.  
Sole estate his sire bequeathed, —  
Hapless sire to hapless son, —  
Was the wailing song he breathed,  
And his chain when life was done.

10

What his fault, or what his crime ?  
Or what ill planet crossed his prime ?  
Heart too soft and will too weak  
To front the fate that crouches near, —  
Dove beneath the vulture's beak ; —  
Will song dissuade the thirsty spear ?  
Dragged from his mother's arms and  
breast,  
Displaced, disfurnished here,  
His wistful toil to do his best  
Chilled by a ribald jeer.

20

Great men in the Senate sate,  
Sage and hero, side by side,

Building for their sons the State,  
Which they shall rule with pride.  
They forbore to break the chain  
Which bound the dusky tribe,  
Checked by the owners' fierce disdain,  
Lured by ' Union ' as the bribe.  
Destiny sat by, and said,  
' Pang for pang your seed shall pay,  
Hide in false peace your coward head,  
I bring round the harvest day.'

30

## II

FREEDOM all winged expands,  
Nor perches in a narrow place;  
Her broad van seeks unplanted lands;  
She loves a poor and virtuous race.  
Clinging to a colder zone  
Whose dark sky sheds the snowflake  
down,  
The snowflake is her banner's star,  
Her stripes the boreal streamers are.  
Long she loved the Northman well;  
Now the iron age is done,  
She will not refuse to dwell  
With the offspring of the Sun;  
Foundling of the desert far,  
Where palms plume, siroccos blaze,  
He roves unhurt the burning ways  
In climates of the summer star.  
He has avenues to God  
Hid from men of Northern brain,  
Far beholding, without cloud,  
What these with slowest steps attain.  
If once the generous chief arrive  
To lead him willing to be led,  
For freedom he will strike and strive,  
And drain his heart till he be dead.

40

50

## III

In an age of fops and toys,  
Wanting wisdom, void of right,  
Who shall nerve heroic boys  
To hazard all in Freedom's fight, —  
Break sharply off their jolly games,  
Forsake their comrades gay  
And quit proud homes and youthful dames  
For famine, toil and fray ?  
Yet on the nimble air benign  
Speed nimbler messages,  
That waft the breath of grace divine  
To hearts in sloth and ease.  
So nigh is grandeur to our dust,  
So near is God to man,

60

70

When Duty whispers low, *Thou must,*  
The youth replies, *I can.*<sup>1</sup>

## IV

OH, well for the fortunate soul  
Which Music's wings infold,  
Stealing away the memory  
Of sorrows new and old !  
Yet happier he whose inward sight,  
Stayed on his subtile thought, 80  
Shuts his sense on toys of time,  
To vacant bosoms brought.  
But best befriended of the God  
He who, in evil times,  
Warned by an inward voice,  
Heeds not the darkness and the dread,  
Biding by his rule and choice,  
Feeling only the fiery thread  
Leading over heroic ground,  
Walled with mortal terror round, 90  
To the aim which him allures,  
And the sweet heaven his deed secures.  
Peril around, all else appalling,  
Cannon in front and leaden rain  
Him duty through the clarion calling  
To the van called not in vain.

Stainless soldier on the walls,  
Knowing this, — and knows no more, —  
Whoever fights, whoever falls,  
Justice conquers evermore, 100  
Justice after as before, —  
And he who battles on her side,  
God, though he were ten times slain,  
Crowns him victor glorified,  
Victor over death and pain.

## V

BLOOMS the laurel which belongs  
To the valiant chief who fights;  
I see the wreath, I hear the songs  
Lauding the Eternal Rights,  
Victors over daily wrongs : 110  
Awful victors, they misguide  
Whom they will destroy,  
And their coming triumph hide  
In our downfall, or our joy:

<sup>1</sup> These lines, a moment after they were written, seemed as if they had been carved on marble for a thousand years. (HOLMES, *Life of Emerson*.)

Compare Emerson's 'Address at the Dedication of the Soldiers' Monument in Concord,' especially the paragraph beginning: 'All sorts of men went to the war;' and his 'Harvard Commemoration Speech, July 21, 1865.'

They reach no term, they never sleep,  
In equal strength through space abide;  
Though, feigning dwarfs, they crouch and  
creep,  
The strong they slay, the swift outstride :  
Fate's grass grows rank in valley clods,  
And rankly on the castled steep, — 120  
Speak it firmly, these are gods,  
All are ghosts beside.

1863.

MY GARDEN<sup>2</sup>

If I could put my woods in song  
And tell what's there enjoyed,  
All men would to my gardens throng,  
And leave the cities void.

In my plot no tulips blow, —  
Snow-loving pines and oaks instead;  
And rank the savage maples grow  
From Spring's faint flush to Autumn red.

My garden is a forest ledge  
Which older forests bound; 10  
The banks slope down to the blue lake-  
edge,  
Then plunge to depths profound.

Here once the Deluge ploughed,  
Laid the terraces, one by one;  
Ebbing later whence it flowed,  
They bleach and dry in the sun.

The sowers make haste to depart, —  
The wind and the birds which sowed it;  
Not for fame, nor by rules of art,  
Planted these, and tempests flowed it. 20

Waters that wash my garden-side  
Play not in Nature's lawful web,  
They heed not moon or solar tide, —  
Five years elapse from flood to ebb.

Hither hasted, in old time, Jove,  
And every god, — none did refuse;  
And be sure at last came Love,  
And after Love, the Muse.

<sup>2</sup> Emerson wrote to Carlyle, May 14, 1846: 'I, too, have a new plaything, the best I ever had, — a wood-lot. Last fall I bought a piece of more than forty acres, on the border of a little lake half a mile wide and more, called Walden Pond; — a place to which my feet have for years been accustomed to bring me once or twice a week at all seasons.' See the whole letter, in the *Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence*, vol. ii, pp. 123-125.



Keen ears can catch a syllable,  
As if one spake to another, 30  
In the hemlocks tall, untamable,  
And what the whispering grasses smother.

Æolian harps in the pine  
Ring with the song of the Fates;  
Infant Bacchus in the vine, —  
Far distant yet his chorus waits.

Canst thou copy in verse one chime  
Of the wood-bell's peal and cry,  
Write in a book the morning's prime,  
Or match with words that tender sky? 40

Wonderful verse of the gods,  
Of one import, of varied tone;  
They chant the bliss of their abodes  
To man imprisoned in his own.

Ever the words of the gods resound;  
But the porches of man's ear  
Seldom in this low life's round  
Are unsealed, that he may hear.

Wandering voices in the air  
And murmurs in the wold 50  
Speak what I cannot declare,  
Yet cannot all withhold.

When the shadow fell on the lake,  
The whirlwind in ripples wrote  
Air-bells of fortune that shine and break,  
And omens above thought.

But the meanings cleave to the lake,  
Cannot be carried in book or urn;  
Go thy ways now, come later back,  
On waves and hedges still they burn. 60

These the fates of men forecast,  
Of better men than live to-day;  
If who can read them comes at last  
He will spell in the sculpture, 'Stay.' 1866.

### TERMINUS<sup>1</sup>

It is time to be old,  
To take in sail: —

<sup>1</sup> In the last days of the year 1866, when I was returning from a long stay in the Western States, I met my father in New York just starting for his usual win-

The god of bounds,  
Who sets to seas a shore,  
Came to me in his fatal rounds,  
And said: 'No more!  
No farther shoot  
Thy broad ambitious branches, and thy root.  
Fancy departs: no more invent;  
Contract thy firmament 10  
To compass of a tent.  
There's not enough for this and that,  
Make thy option which of two;  
Economize the failing river,  
Not the less revere the Giver,  
Leave the many and hold the few.  
Timely wise accept the terms,  
Soften the fall with wary foot;  
A little while  
Still plan and smile, 20  
And, — fault of novel germs, —  
Mature the unfallen fruit.  
Curse, if thou wilt, thy sires,  
Bad husbands of their fires,  
Who, when they gave thee breath,  
Failed to bequeath  
The needful sinew stark as once,  
The Baresark marrow to thy bones,  
But left a legacy of ebbing veins,  
Inconstant heat and nerveless reins, — 30  
Amid the Muses, left thee deaf and dumb,  
Amid the gladiators, halt and numb.'

As the bird trims her to the gale,  
I trim myself to the storm of time,  
I man the rudder, reef the sail,  
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:  
'Lowly faithful, banish fear,  
Right onward drive unharmed;  
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,  
And every wave is charmed.' 40  
1866. 1867.

ter lecturing trip, in those days extending beyond the Mississippi. We spent the night together at the St. Denis Hotel, and as we sat by the fire, he read me two or three of his poems for the new May-Day volume, among them 'Terminus.' It almost startled me. No thought of his ageing had ever come to me, and there he sat, with no apparent abatement of bodily vigor, and young in spirit, recognizing with serene acquiescence his failing forces; I think he smiled as he read. He recognized, as none of us did, that his working days were nearly done. They lasted about five years longer, although he lived, in comfortable health, yet ten years beyond those of his activity. Almost at the time when he wrote 'Terminus' he wrote in his journal: —

'Within I do not find wrinkles and used heart, but unspent youth.' (E. W. EMERSON, in the *Centenary Edition*.)



# HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

## THE SPIRIT OF POETRY

THERE is a quiet spirit in these woods,  
That dwells where'er the gentle south-wind  
    blows;  
Where, underneath the white-thorn in the  
    glade,  
The wild flowers bloom, or, kissing the soft  
    air,  
The leaves above their sunny palms out-  
    spread.  
With what a tender and impassioned voice  
It fills the nice and delicate ear of thought,  
When the fast ushering star of morning  
    comes  
O'er-riding the gray hills with golden  
    scarf;  
Or when the cowed and dusky-sandalled  
    Eve,  
In mourning weeds, from out the western  
    gate,  
Departs with silent pace! That spirit  
    moves  
In the green valley, where the silver brook,  
From its full laver, pours the white cas-  
    cade;  
And, babbling low amid the tangled woods,  
Slips down through moss-grown stones with  
    endless laughter.  
And frequent, on the everlasting hills,  
Its feet go forth, when it doth wrap itself  
In all the dark embroidery of the storm,  
And shouts the stern, strong wind. And  
    here, amid  
The silent majesty of these deep woods,  
Its presence shall uplift thy thoughts from  
    earth,  
As to the sunshine and the pure, bright  
    air  
Their tops the green trees lift. Hence  
    gifted bards  
Have ever loved the calm and quiet shades.  
For them there was an eloquent voice in  
    all  
The sylvan pomp of woods, the golden  
    sun,  
The flowers, the leaves, the river on its  
    way,

Blue skies, and silver clouds, and gentle  
    winds,  
The swelling upland, where the sidelong  
    sun  
Aslant the wooded slope, at evening, goes,  
Groves, through whose broken roof the sky  
    looks in,  
Mountain, and shattered cliff, and sunny  
    vale,  
The distant lake, fountains, and mighty  
    trees,  
In many a lazy syllable, repeating  
Their old poetic legends to the wind.

And this is the sweet spirit, that doth fill  
The world; and, in these wayward days of  
    youth,  
My busy fancy oft embodies it,  
As a bright image of the light and beauty  
That dwell in nature; of the heavenly  
    forms  
We worship in our dreams, and the soft  
    hues  
That stain the wild bird's wing, and flush  
    the clouds  
When the sun sets. Within her tender  
    eye  
The heaven of April, with its changing  
    light,  
And when it wears the blue of May, is  
    hung,  
And on her lip the rich, red rose. Her  
    hair  
Is like the summer tresses of the trees,  
When twilight makes them brown, and on  
    her cheek  
Blushes the richness of an autumn sky,  
With ever-shifting beauty. Then her  
    breath,  
It is so like the gentle air of Spring,  
As, from the morning's dewy flowers, it  
    comes  
Full of their fragrance, that it is a joy  
To have it round us, and her silver voice  
Is the rich music of a summer bird,  
Heard in the still night, with its passionate  
    cadence.

BURIAL OF THE MINNISINK<sup>1</sup>

ON sunny slope and beechen swell,  
The shadowed light of evening fell;  
And, where the maple's leaf was brown,  
With soft and silent lapse came down  
The glory that the wood receives,  
At sunset, in its golden leaves.

Far upward in the mellow light  
Rose the blue hills. One cloud of white,  
Around a far uplifted cone,  
In the warm blush of evening shone; 10  
An image of the silver lakes,  
By which the Indian's soul awakes.

But soon a funeral hymn was heard  
Where the soft breath of evening stirred  
The tall, gray forest; and a band  
Of stern in heart, and strong in hand,  
Came winding down beside the wave,  
To lay the red chief in his grave.

They sang, that by his native bowers  
He stood, in the last moon of flowers, 20  
And thirty snows had not yet shed  
Their glory on the warrior's head;  
But, as the summer fruit decays,  
So died he in those naked days.

A dark cloak of the roebuck's skin  
Covered the warrior, and within  
Its heavy folds the weapons, made  
For the hard toils of war, were laid;  
The cuirass, woven of plaited reeds,  
And the broad belt of shells and beads. 30

Before, a dark-haired virgin train  
Chanted the death dirge of the slain;  
Behind, the long procession came  
Of hoary men and chiefs of fame,  
With heavy hearts, and eyes of grief,  
Leading the war-horse of their chief.

Stripped of his proud and martial dress,  
Uncurbed, unreined, and riderless,

<sup>1</sup> This poem, written when Longfellow was eighteen years old, is interesting as an early example of that love for Indian subjects which later produced 'Hiawatha.' It should be compared with Whittier's early poems on Indian subjects, 'Pentucket,' 'The Funeral Tree of the Sokokis,' 'Mary Garvin,' 'Mogg Megone,' etc.; with Lowell's 'Chippewa Legend'; and with Bryant's 'The Indian Girl's Lament,' 'Monument Mountain,' etc.

With darting eye, and nostril spread,  
And heavy and impatient tread, 40  
He came; and oft that eye so proud  
Asked for his rider in the crowd.

They buried the dark chief; they freed  
Beside the grave his battle steed;  
And swift an arrow cleaved its way  
To his stern heart! One piercing neigh  
Arose, and, on the dead man's plain,  
The rider grasps his steed again.

1825.

1826.

## THE RETURN OF SPRING

FROM CHARLES D'ORLÉANS<sup>2</sup>

Now Time throws off his cloak again  
Of ermined frost, and wind, and rain,  
And clothes him in the embroidery  
Of glittering sun and clear blue sky.  
With beast and bird the forest rings,  
Each in his jargon cries or sings;  
And Time throws off his cloak again  
Of ermined frost, and wind, and rain.

River, and fount, and tinkling brook  
Wear in their dainty livery  
Drops of silver jewelry;  
In new-made suit they merry look;  
And Time throws off his cloak again  
Of ermined frost, and wind, and rain.

1830.

1831.

<sup>2</sup> Longfellow's work as a translator extended from almost the beginning to the end of his poetical career, included versions from the French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Latin, German, Danish, and Anglo-Saxon, and culminated in his rendering of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. This work unquestionably played an important part in his development, increasing the range and suppleness of his powers, and keeping the poet alive in him during the long period when he was completely absorbed by teaching, lecturing, prose writing, the composition and editing of text-books, and foreign travel. For twelve or thirteen years, between his early poems and the new beginning of his poetical work in the 'Psalm of Life,' he wrote practically nothing in verse except translations.

Toward the end of his life (in a letter of March 7, 1879) he said of translation: 'And what a difficult work! There is evidently a great and strange fascination in translating. It seizes people with irresistible power, and whirls them away till they are beside themselves. It is like a ghost beckoning one to follow.' (*Life*, vol. iii, p. 298.) (In all notes on Longfellow's poems, the 'Life' referred to is Samuel Longfellow's *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, 3 volumes, 1887.)

## ART AND NATURE

FROM FRANCISCO DE MEDRANO

THE works of human artifice soon tire  
 The curious eye; the fountain's sparkling  
     rill,  
 And gardens, when adorned by human  
     skill,  
 Reproach the feeble hand, the vain desire.  
 But oh! the free and wild magnificence  
 Of Nature, in her lavish hours, doth steal,  
 In admiration silent and intense,  
 The soul of him who hath a soul to feel.  
 The river moving on its ceaseless way,  
 The verdant reach of meadows fair and  
     green,  
 And the blue hills, that bound the sylvan  
     scene,  
 These speak of grandeur, that defies  
     decay, —  
 Proclaim the Eternal Architect on high.  
 Who stamps on all his works his own  
     eternity.

1832.

1832.

A PSALM OF LIFE<sup>1</sup>WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN  
SAID TO THE PSALMIST

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,  
 Life is but an empty dream! —  
 For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
 And things are not what they seem.

<sup>1</sup> This poem has been called 'the very heart-beat of the American conscience.' When it was first published, anonymously, in the *Knickerbocker* magazine for October, 1838, it at once attracted attention. Whittier wrote of it in the *Freeman*: 'We know not who the author may be, but he or she is no common man or woman. These nine simple verses are worth more than all the dreams of Shelley, and Keats, and Wordsworth. They are alive and vigorous with the spirit of the day in which we live, — the moral steam engine of an age of action.' (Quoted by Professor Carpenter in his *Life of Whittier*.)

The writing of the 'Psalm' is recorded in Longfellow's *Journal* under the date of July 26, 1838. He afterwards said of it, 'I kept it some time in manuscript, unwilling to show it to any one, it being a voice from my inmost heart at a time when I was rallying from depression.' (*Life of Longfellow*, vol. i, p. 301.) In other passages of his *Journal* he speaks of writing 'another psalm,' 'a psalm of death,' etc. The 'psalmist' to whom the young man speaks, is therefore the poet himself. 'It was the young man's better heart answering and refuting his own mood of despondency.' (*Life*, vol. i, pp. 283-284.) See further the *Life of Longfellow*, vol. i, pp. 281-284; and vol. ii, pp. 186, 283. The poem has been translated into many languages, including Chinese and Sanscrit. (*Life*, vol. i, p. 376; vol. iii, pp. 43, 64.)

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
 And the grave is not its goal;  
 Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
 Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
 Is our destined end or way;  
 But to act, that each to-morrow  
 Find us farther than to-day.

10

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,  
 And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
 Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
 Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,  
 In the bivouac of Life,  
 Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
 Be a hero in the strife!

20

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
 Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
 Act, — act in the living Present!  
 Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us  
 We can make our lives sublime,  
 And, departing, leave behind us  
 Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,  
 Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
 A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
 Seeing, shall take heart again.

30

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
 With a heart for any fate;  
 Still achieving, still pursuing,  
 Learn to labor and to wait.

1838.

1838.

THE LIGHT OF STARS<sup>2</sup>

THE night is come, but not too soon;  
 And sinking silently,  
 All silently, the little moon  
 Drops down behind the sky.

<sup>2</sup> 'This poem was written on a beautiful summer night. The moon, a little strip of silver, was just setting behind the grove at Mount Auburn, and the planet Mars blazing in the southeast. There was a singular light in the sky.' (H. W. L.) It was published in the same number of the *Knickerbocker* as the last, where it was headed *A Second Psalm of Life*. (*Cambridge Edition of Longfellow's Poetical Works*.)

There is no light in earth or heaven  
But the cold light of stars;  
And the first watch of night is given  
To the red planet Mars.

Is it the tender star of love ?  
The star of love and dreams ? 10  
Oh no ! from that blue tent above  
A hero's armor gleams.

And earnest thoughts within me rise,  
When I behold afar,  
Suspended in the evening skies,  
The shield of that red star.

O star of strength ! I see thee stand  
And smile upon my pain;  
Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand,  
And I am strong again. 20

Within my breast there is no light  
But the cold light of stars;  
I give the first watch of the night  
To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will,  
He rises in my breast,  
Serene, and resolute, and still,  
And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whosoe'er thou art,  
That readest this brief psalm, 30  
As one by one thy hopes depart,  
Be resolute and calm.

Oh, fear not in a world like this,  
And thou shalt know ere long,  
Know how sublime a thing it is  
To suffer and be strong.

1838.

1838.

HYMN TO THE NIGHT<sup>1</sup>

'Ασπασίη, τριλλιστος

I HEARD the trailing garments of the Night  
Sweep through her marble halls !  
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with  
light  
From the celestial walls !

<sup>1</sup> No poem ever opened with a beauty more august,' says Poe in his early review of the *Voices of the Night* (February, 1840). See his further criticism of the poem, line by line, in the *Virginia Edition* of his *Works*, vol. x, pp. 72-76.

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,  
Stoop o'er me from above;  
The calm, majestic presence of the Night,  
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,  
The manifold, soft chimes,  
That fill the haunted chambers of the  
Night,  
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight  
air  
My spirit drank repose;  
The fountain of perpetual peace flows  
there, —  
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night ! from thee I learn to bear  
What man has borne before !  
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,  
And they complain no more.

Peace ! Peace ! Orestes-like I breathe this  
prayer !

Descend with broad-winged flight,  
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the  
most fair,  
The best-beloved Night !

1839.

1839.

FOOTSTEPS OF ANGELS<sup>2</sup>

WHEN the hours of Day are numbered,  
And the voices of the Night  
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,  
To a holy, calm delight;

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,  
And, like phantoms grim and tall,  
Shadows from the fitful firelight  
Dance upon the parlor wall;

<sup>2</sup> A slightly different version of the first, second, third, sixth, seventh and eighth stanzas, with the title 'Evening Shadows,' is to be found in Longfellow's *Journal* under the date of February 27, 1838. (*Life*, vol. i, pp. 287-288). The poem was finished March 26, 1839 (*Life*, vol. i, pp. 327-328). The fourth stanza alludes to his brother-in-law and closest friend, George W. Pierce, of whose death he had heard in Germany on Christmas Eve of 1835, and of whom he wrote nearly twenty years later: 'I have never ceased to feel that in his death something was taken from my own life which could never be restored. I have constantly in my memory his beautiful and manly character, frank, generous, impetuous, gentle.' The sixth and following stanzas allude to Mrs. Longfellow, who died at Rotterdam, November 29, 1835.

Then the forms of the departed  
Enter at the open door; 20  
The beloved, the true-hearted,  
Come to visit me once more;

He, the young and strong, who cherished  
Noble longings for the strife,  
By the roadside fell and perished,  
Weary with the march of life!

They, the holy ones and weakly,  
Who the cross of suffering bore,  
Folded their pale hands so meekly,  
Spake with us on earth no more! 20

And with them the Being Beauteous,  
Who unto my youth was given,  
More than all things else to love me,  
And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep  
Comes that messenger divine,  
Takes the vacant chair beside me,  
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me  
With those deep and tender eyes, 30  
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,  
Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,  
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,  
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,  
Breathing from her lips of air.

Oh, though oft depressed and lonely,  
All my fears are laid aside,  
If I but remember only  
Such as these have lived and died! 40

1838, 1839.

1839.

### THE BELEAGUERED CITY

I HAVE read, in some old, marvellous  
tale,<sup>1</sup>  
Some legend strange and vague,

<sup>1</sup> During his visit to his friend Ward, in New York, in August, strolling into the library one day after breakfast, he took carelessly from the shelf a volume of Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*, and opened at one of the notes, containing the tradition about the city of Prague upon which this poem is founded: 'Similar to this was the *Nacht Lager*, or midnight camp, which seemed nightly to beleaguer the walls of Prague, but which disappeared upon the recitation of certain magical words.' (*Life*, vol. I, p. 344, note.)

That a midnight host of spectres pale  
Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream,  
With the wan moon overhead,  
There stood, as in an awful dream,  
The army of the dead.

White as a sea-fog, landward bound,  
The spectral camp was seen, 20  
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,  
The river flowed between.

No other voice nor sound was there,  
No drum, nor sentry's pace;  
The mist-like banners clasped the air  
As clouds with clouds embrace.

But when the old cathedral bell  
Proclaimed the morning prayer,  
The white pavilions rose and fell  
On the alarmed air. 20

Down the broad valley fast and far  
The troubled army fled;  
Up rose the glorious morning star,  
The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,  
That strange and mystic scroll,  
That an army of phantoms vast and wan  
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,  
In Fancy's misty light, 30  
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam  
Portentous through the night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground  
The spectral camp is seen,  
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,  
Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice nor sound is there,  
In the army of the grave;  
No other challenge breaks the air,  
But the rushing of Life's wave. 40

And when the solemn and deep church-bell  
Entreats the soul to pray,  
The midnight phantoms feel the spell,  
The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar  
The spectral camp is fled;

Faith shineth as a morning star,  
Our ghastly fears are dead.

1839.

1839.

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS<sup>1</sup>

It was the schooner Hesperus,  
That sailed the wintry sea;  
And the skipper had taken his little daugh-  
tèr,  
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,  
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,  
And her bosom white as the hawthorn  
buds,  
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,  
His pipe was in his mouth, 10  
And he watched how the veering flaw did  
blow  
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,  
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,  
'I pray thee, put into yonder port,  
For I fear a hurricane.

'Last night, the moon had a golden ring,  
And to-night no moon we see!'  
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his  
pipe,  
And a scornful laugh laughed he. 20

Colder and louder blew the wind,  
A gale from the Northeast,  
The snow fell hissing in the brine,  
And the billows frothed like yeast.

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow wrote in his *Journal* on December 17, 1839: 'News of shipwrecks horrible on the coast. Twenty bodies washed ashore near Gloucester, one lashed to a piece of the wreck. There is a reef called Norman's Woe where many of these took place; among others the schooner Hesperus. Also the Sea-flower on Black Rock. I must write a ballad upon this.'

The ballad was actually written twelve days later, on the night of December 29: 'I wrote last evening a notice of Allston's poems. After which I sat till twelve o'clock by my fire, smoking, when suddenly it came into my mind to write the "Ballad of the Schooner Hesperus;" which I accordingly did. Then I went to bed, but could not sleep. New thoughts were running in my mind, and I got up to add them to the ballad. It was three by the clock. I then went to bed and fell asleep. I feel pleased with the ballad. It hardly cost me an effort. It did not come into my mind by lines but by stanzas.' (*Journal*, December 30.)

Down came the storm, and smote amain  
The vessel in its strength;  
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened  
steed,  
Then leaped her cable's length.

'Come hither! come hither! my little  
daughtèr,  
And do not tremble so; 30  
For I can weather the roughest gale  
That ever wind did blow.'

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat  
Against the stinging blast;  
He cut a rope from a broken spar,  
And bound her to the mast.

'O father! I hear the church-bells ring,  
Oh say, what may it be?'  
'T is a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast! —  
And he steered for the open sea. 40

'O father! I hear the sound of guns,  
Oh say, what may it be?'  
'Some ship in distress, that cannot live  
In such an angry sea!'

'O father! I see a gleaming light,  
Oh say, what may it be?'  
But the father answered never a word,  
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,  
With his face turned to the skies, 50  
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming  
snow  
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and  
prayed  
That saved she might be;  
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the  
wave,  
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and  
drear,  
Through the whistling sleet and snow,  
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept  
Tow'rd the reef of Norman's Woe. 60

And ever the fitful gusts between  
A sound came from the land;  
It was the sound of the trampling surf  
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,  
 She drifted a dreary wreck,  
 And a whooping billow swept the crew  
 Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves  
 Looked soft as carded wool, 70  
 But the cruel rocks, they gored her side  
 Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,  
 With the masts went by the board;  
 Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,  
 Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,  
 A fisherman stood aghast,  
 To see the form of a maiden fair,  
 Lashed close to a drifting mast. 80

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,  
 The salt tears in her eyes;  
 And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-  
 weed,  
 On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,  
 In the midnight and the snow!  
 Christ save us all from a death like this,  
 On the reef of Norman's Woe!

1839.

1840.

### THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH<sup>1</sup>

UNDER a spreading chestnut-tree  
 The village smithy stands;  
 The smith, a mighty man is he,  
 With large and sinewy hands;  
 And the muscles of his brawny arms  
 Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,  
 His face is like the tan;  
 His brow is wet with honest sweat,  
 He earns whate'er he can, 10  
 And looks the whole world in the face,  
 For he owes not any man.

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow at first called 'The Village Blacksmith' a new Psalm of Life, but later it was included among the *Ballads*. See the *Life*, vol. i, pp. 345, 374 and note.

In 1876 the 'spreading chestnut-tree' was cut down to give room for the widening of Brattle Street, and from its wood was made the armchair presented to Longfellow by the schoolchildren of Cambridge. See p. xxx.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,  
 You can hear his bellows blow;  
 You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,  
 With measured beat and slow,  
 Like a sexton ringing the village bell,  
 When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school  
 Look in at the open door; 20  
 They love to see the flaming forge,  
 And hear the bellows roar,  
 And catch the burning sparks that fly  
 Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,  
 And sits among his boys;  
 He hears the parson pray and preach,  
 He hears his daughter's voice,  
 Singing in the village choir,  
 And it makes his heart rejoice. 30

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,  
 Singing in Paradise!  
 He needs must think of her once more  
 How in the grave she lies;  
 And with his hard, rough hand he wipes  
 A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling, — rejoicing, — sorrowing,  
 Onward through life he goes;  
 Each morning sees some task begin,  
 Each evening sees it close; 40  
 Something attempted, something done,  
 Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy  
 friend,  
 For the lesson thou hast taught!  
 Thus at the flaming forge of life  
 Our fortunes must be wrought;  
 Thus on its sounding anvil shaped  
 Each burning deed and thought. 1839. 1840.

### THE SKELETON IN ARMOR<sup>2</sup>

Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!  
 Who, with thy hollow breast  
 Still in rude armor drest,  
 Comest to daunt me!

<sup>2</sup> Longfellow wrote in his Journal on May 3, 1838: 'I have been looking at the old Northern Sagas, and



Wrapt not in Eastern balms,  
But with thy fleshless palms  
Stretched, as if asking alms,  
Why dost thou haunt me ?

Then, from those cavernous eyes  
Pale flashes seemed to rise, 10  
As when the Northern skies  
Gleam in December;

thinking of a series of ballads or a romantic poem on the deeds of the first bold viking who crossed to this western world, with storm-spirits and devil-machinery under water. New England ballads I have long thought of. This seems to be an introduction. I will dream more of this.

A few months later, returning to Cambridge from Newport, where he had doubtless seen the 'Round Tower,' he passed through Fall River just after the skeleton in armor had been unearthed. These two things fitted in with his previous conception, and on May 24, 1839, he speaks of his 'plan for a heroic poem on the Discovery of America by the Northmen, in which the Round Tower at Newport and the Skeleton in Armor have a part to play.' In a letter to his father, of December 13, 1840, after the ballad was written, he speaks of having himself seen the skeleton: 'I suppose it to be the remains of one of the old Northern sea rovers who came to this country in the tenth century. Of course I make the tradition myself.'

For a full account of the finding of the skeleton, see the *American Monthly Magazine* of January, 1836, from which the following description is taken:—

'In digging down a hill near the village, a large mass of earth slid off, leaving in the bank and partially uncovered a human skull, which on examination was found to belong to a body buried in a sitting posture; the head being about one foot below what had been for many years the surface of the ground. The surrounding earth was carefully removed, and the body found to be enveloped in a covering of coarse bark of a dark color. Within this envelope were found the remains of another of coarse cloth, made of fine bark, and about the texture of a Manila coffee bag. On the breast was a plate of brass, thirteen inches long, six broad at the upper end, and five in the lower. This plate appears to have been cast, and is from one eighth to three thirty-seconds of an inch in thickness. It is so much corroded that whether or not anything was engraved upon it has not yet been ascertained. It is oval in form, the edges being irregular, apparently made so by corrosion. Below the breastplate, and entirely encircling the body, was a belt composed of brass tubes, each four and a half inches in length, and three sixteenths of an inch in diameter, arranged longitudinally and close together, the length of the tube being the width of the belt. The tubes are of thin brass, cast upon hollow reeds, and were fastened together by pieces of sinew. Near the right knee was a quiver of arrows. The arrows are of brass, thin, flat, and triangular in shape, with a round hole cut through near the base. The shaft was fastened to the head by inserting the latter in an opening at the end of the wood and then tying with a sinew through the round hole, a mode of constructing the weapon never practised by the Indians, not even with their arrows of thin shell. Parts of the shaft still remain on some of them. When first discovered, the arrows were in a sort of quiver of bark, which fell to pieces when exposed to the air.'

Poe calls 'The Skeleton in Armor' 'a pure and perfect thesis artistically treated.' See his review of Longfellow's *Ballads and Other Poems*, April, 1842, in the *Virginia Edition* of his *Works*, vol. xi.

And, like the water's flow  
Under December's snow,  
Came a dull voice of woe  
From the heart's chamber.

'I was a Viking old !  
My deeds, though manifold,  
No Skald in song has told,  
No Saga taught thee ! 20  
Take heed, that in thy verse  
Thou dost the tale rehearse,  
Else dread a dead man's curse;  
For this I sought thee.

'Far in the Northern Land,  
By the wild Baltic's strand,  
I, with my childish hand,  
Tamed the gerfalcon;  
And, with my skates fast-bound,  
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound, 30  
That the poor whimpering hound  
Trembled to walk on.

'Oft to his frozen lair  
Tracked I the grisly bear,  
While from my path the hare  
Fled like a shadow;  
Oft through the forest dark  
Followed the were-wolf's bark,  
Until the soaring lark  
Sang from the meadow. 40

'But when I older grew,  
Joining a corsair's crew,  
O'er the dark sea I flew  
With the marauders.  
Wild was the life we led;  
Many the souls that sped,  
Many the hearts that bled,  
By our stern orders.

'Many a wassail-bout  
Wore the long Winter out; 50  
Often our midnight shout  
Set the cocks crowing,  
As we the Berserk's tale  
Measured in cups of ale,  
Draining the oaken pail,  
Filled to o'erflowing.

'Once as I told in glee  
Tales of the stormy sea,  
Soft eyes did gaze on me,  
Burning yet tender; 60

And as the white stars shine  
On the dark Norway pine,  
On that dark heart of mine  
Fell their soft splendor.

'I wooed the blue-eyed maid,  
Yielding, yet half afraid,  
And in the forest's shade  
Our vows were plighted.  
Under its loosened vest  
Fluttered her little breast,  
Like birds within their nest  
By the hawk frightened.

70

'Bright in her father's hall  
Shields gleamed upon the wall,  
Loud sang the minstrels all,  
Chanting his glory;  
When of old Hildebrand  
I asked his daughter's hand,  
Mute did the minstrels stand  
To hear my story.

80

'While the brown ale he quaffed,  
Loud then the champion laughed,  
And as the wind-gusts waft  
The sea-foam brightly,  
So the loud laugh of scorn,  
Out of those lips unshorn,  
From the deep drinking-horn  
Blew the foam lightly.

'She was a Prince's child,  
I but a Viking wild,  
And though she blushed and smiled,  
I was discarded!  
Should not the dove so white  
Follow the sea-mew's flight,  
Why did they leave that night  
Her nest unguarded?

90

'Scarce had I put to sea,  
Bearing the maid with me,  
Fairest of all was she  
Among the Norsemen!  
When on the white sea-strand,  
Waving his armed hand,  
Saw we old Hildebrand,  
With twenty horsemen.

100

'Then launched they to the blast,  
Bent like a reed each mast,  
Yet we were gaining fast,  
When the wind failed us;

And with a sudden flaw  
Came round the gusty Skaw,  
So that our foe we saw  
Laugh as he hailed us.

110

'And as to catch the gale  
Round veered the flapping sail,  
"Death!" was the helmsman's hail,  
"Death without quarter!"  
Mid-ships with iron keel  
Struck we her ribs of steel;  
Down her black hulk did reel  
Through the black water!

120

'As with his wings aslant,  
Sails the fierce cormorant,  
Seeking some rocky haunt,  
With his prey laden,—  
So toward the open main,  
Beating to sea again,  
Through the wild hurricane,  
Bore I the maiden.

'Three weeks we westward bore,  
And when the storm was o'er,  
Cloud-like we saw the shore  
Stretching to leeward;  
There for my lady's bower  
Built I the lofty tower,  
Which, to this very hour,  
Stands looking seaward.

130

'There lived we many years;  
Time dried the maiden's tears;  
She had forgot her fears,  
She was a mother;  
Death closed her mild blue eyes,  
Under that tower she lies;<sup>1</sup>  
Ne'er shall the sun arise  
On such another!

140

'Still grew my bosom then,  
Still as a stagnant fen!  
Hateful to me were men,  
The sunlight hateful!  
In the vast forest here,  
Clad in my warlike gear,  
Fell I upon my spear,  
Oh, death was grateful!

150

<sup>1</sup> The 'Round Tower' at Newport, sometimes called the Old Mill, is of a style of architecture belonging to the eleventh century, and is thought by some to have been built by the Northmen. This is exceedingly doubtful, however.

' Thus, seamed with many scars,  
 Bursting these prison bars,  
 Up to its native stars  
 My soul ascended !  
 There from the flowing bowl  
 Deep drinks the warrior's soul,  
*Skool !* to the Northland ! *skool !*<sup>1</sup>  
 Thus the tale ended.

1840.

160  
1841.

## SERENADE

FROM 'THE SPANISH STUDENT'

STARS of the summer night !  
 Far in yon azure deeps,  
 Hide, hide your golden light !  
 She sleeps !  
 My lady sleeps !  
 Sleeps !

Moon of the summer night !  
 Far down yon western steeps,  
 Sink, sink in silver light !  
 She sleeps !  
 My lady sleeps !  
 Sleeps !

Wind of the summer night !  
 Where yonder woodbine creeps,  
 Fold, fold thy pinions light !  
 She sleeps !  
 My lady sleeps !  
 Sleeps !

Dreams of the summer night !  
 Tell her, her lover keeps  
 Watch ! while in slumbers light  
 She sleeps !  
 My lady sleeps !  
 Sleeps !

1840.

1842.

## ENDYMION

THE rising moon has hid the stars;  
 Her level rays, like golden bars,  
 Lie on the landscape green,  
 With shadows brown between.

<sup>1</sup> In Scandinavia, this is the customary salutation when drinking a health. I have slightly changed the orthography of the word [*skool*] in order to preserve the correct pronunciation. (Longfellow.)

And silver white the river gleams,  
 As if Diana, in her dreams  
 Had dropt her silver bow  
 Upon the meadows low.

On such a tranquil night as this,  
 She woke Endymion with a kiss,  
 When, sleeping in the grove,  
 He dreamed not of her love.

10

Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,  
 Love gives itself, but is not bought;  
 Nor voice, nor sound betrays  
 Its deep, impassioned gaze.

It comes, — the beautiful, the free,  
 The crown of all humanity, —  
 In silence and alone  
 To seek the elected one.

20

It lifts the boughs, whose shadows deep  
 Are Life's oblivion, the soul's sleep,  
 And kisses the closed eyes  
 Of him who slumbering lies.

O weary hearts ! O slumbering eyes !  
 O drooping souls, whose destinies  
 Are fraught with fear and pain,  
 Ye shall be loved again !

No one is so accursed by fate,  
 No one so utterly desolate,  
 But some heart, though unknown,  
 Responds unto his own.

30

Responds, — as if with unseen wings,  
 An angel touched its quivering strings;  
 And whispers, in its song,  
 ' Where hast thou stayed so long ? '

1841.

1841.

## THE RAINY DAY

THE day is cold, and dark, and dreary;  
 It rains, and the wind is never weary;  
 The vine still clings to the mouldering  
 wall,  
 But at every gust the dead leaves fall,  
 And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;  
 It rains, and the wind is never weary;  
 My thoughts still cling to the mouldering  
 Past,

But the hopes of youth fall thick in the  
blast,  
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;  
Behind the clouds is the sun still shin-  
ing;

Thy fate is the common fate of all,  
Into each life some rain must fall,  
Some days must be dark and dreary.

1841.

1841.

### MAIDENHOOD<sup>1</sup>

MAIDEN! with the meek, brown eyes,  
In whose orbs a shadow lies  
Like the dusk in evening skies!

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,  
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,  
As the braided streamlets run!

Standing, with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet,  
Womanhood and childhood fleet!

Gazing, with a timid glance,  
On the brooklet's swift advance,  
On the river's broad expanse!

10

Deep and still, that gliding stream  
Beautiful to thee must seem,  
As the river of a dream.

Then why pause with indecision,  
When bright angels in thy vision  
Beckon thee to fields Elysian?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,  
As the dove, with startled eye,  
Sees the falcon's shadow fly?

20

Hearest thou voices on the shore,  
That our ears perceive no more,  
Deafened by the cataract's roar?

Oh, thou child of many prayers!  
Life hath quicksands, — Life hath snares!  
Care and age come unawares!

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow wrote to his father on December 18, 1841: "The *Ballads and Other Poems* will be published to-morrow. . . . I think the last two pieces ["Maidenhood" and "Excelsior"] the best, — perhaps as good as anything I have written." (*Life*, vol. i, p. 109.)

Like the swell of some sweet tune,  
Morning rises into noon,  
May glides onward into June.

30

Childhood is the bough, where slumbered  
Birds and blossoms many-numbered; —  
Age, that bough with snows encumbered.

Gather, then, each flower that grows,  
When the young heart overflows,  
To embalm that tent of snows.

Bear a lily in thy hand;  
Gates of brass cannot withstand  
One touch of that magic wand.

Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth, 40  
In thy heart the dew of youth,  
On thy lips the smile of truth.

Oh, that dew, like balm, shall steal  
Into wounds that cannot heal,  
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal;

And that smile, like sunshine, dart  
Into many a sunless heart,  
For a smile of God thou art.

1841.

1841.

### EXCELSIOR<sup>2</sup>

THE shades of night were falling fast,  
As through an Alpine village passed

<sup>2</sup> "Excelsior" was inspired by the motto on the shield of New York State, which Longfellow happened to see copied as the heading of a newspaper. The significance of the poem is well expressed by Poe at the end of his review of Longfellow's *Ballads and Other Poems*, in a passage beginning, "It depicts the earnest upward impulse of the soul, — an impulse not to be subdued even in death." Longfellow himself has described his purpose fully in a letter to C. K. Tuckerman: —

"I have had the pleasure of receiving your note in regard to the poem 'Excelsior,' and very willingly give you my intention in writing it. This was no more than to display, in a series of pictures, the life of a man of genius, resisting all temptations, laying aside all fears, heedless of all warnings, and pressing right on to accomplish his purpose. His motto is *Excelsior*, 'higher.' He passes through the Alpine village — through the rough, cold paths of the world — where the peasants cannot understand him, and where the watchword is an 'unknown tongue.' He disregards the happiness of domestic peace and sees the glaciers — his fate — before him. He disregards the warning of the old man's wisdom and the fascinations of woman's love. He answers to all, 'Higher yet!' The monks of St. Bernard are the representatives of religious forms and ceremonies, and with their oft-repeated prayer mingles the sound of his voice, telling them there is something higher than forms and ceremonies. Filled with these aspirations, he perishes; without having reached the

A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,  
A banner with the strange device,  
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath,  
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,  
And like a silver clarion rung  
The accents of that unknown tongue,  
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light  
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;  
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,  
And from his lips escaped a groan,  
Excelsior!

'Try not the Pass!' the old man said;  
'Dark lowers the tempest overhead,  
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!'—  
And loud that clarion voice replied,  
Excelsior!

'Oh stay,' the maiden said, 'and rest  
Thy weary head upon this breast!'—  
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,  
But still he answered, with a sigh,  
Excelsior!

'Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!  
Beware the awful avalanche!'—  
This was the peasant's last Good-night,  
A voice replied, far up the height,  
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward  
The pious monks of Saint Bernard  
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,  
A voice cried through the startled air,  
Excelsior!

A traveller, by the faithful hound,  
Half-buried in the snow was found,  
Still grasping in his hand of ice  
That banner with the strange device,  
Excelsior!

There in the twilight cold and gray,  
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,

perfection he longed for; and the voice heard in the  
air is the promise of immortality and progress ever up-  
ward.'

The manuscript of the poem, containing many altera-  
tions, is kept on exhibition in the Art Room of the  
Harvard University Library. It is written on the back  
of a letter from Charles Sumner, and dated 'September  
28, 1841. Half-past three o'clock, morning.' See H. E.  
Scudder's *Men and Letters*, pp. 137-146: 'The Shaping  
of Excelsior.'

And from the sky, serene and far,  
A voice fell, like a falling star,  
Excelsior!

1841.

1841.

MEZZO CAMMIN<sup>1</sup>

HALF of my life is gone, and I have let  
The years slip from me and have not ful-  
filled

The aspiration of my youth, to build  
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.  
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret  
Of restless passions that would not be  
stilled,

But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,  
Kept me from what I may accomplish yet;  
Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past  
Lying beneath me with its sounds and  
sights,—

A city in the twilight dim and vast,  
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleam-  
ing lights,—

And hear above me on the autumnal blast  
The cataract of Death far thundering from  
the heights.

1842.

1842.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM<sup>2</sup>

BESIDE the ungathered rice he lay,  
His sickle in his hand;

His breast was bare, his matted hair  
Was buried in the sand.

Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,  
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams  
The lordly Niger flowed;

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow's health was so seriously impaired by his close work as teacher, lecturer, editor, and author, that in the spring of 1842 he took six months' leave of absence, and spent most of the time at the 'water-cure' of Marienberg. While there he wrote no verse except this sonnet, dated August 25, just before leaving for England on his way home. It was first published in the *Life*.

<sup>2</sup> Longfellow wrote all his *Poems on Slavery* during his voyage home in 1842, and they were published in a small volume of thirty-one pages in December of that year. The intense sincerity of Whittier's poems against slavery is lacking in Longfellow's sentimental and 'romantic' treatment of the subject; but it meant much for him to take the side which he did, so early as 1842. See the *Life*, vol. i, pp. 448-458, vol. ii, pp. 7-10, 20-21; and T. W. Higginson's *Life of Longfellow*, pp. 163-167. Compare the notes on Lowell's 'Stanzas on Freedom' and on Whittier's 'To William Lloyd Garrison.'

Beneath the palm-trees on the plain  
 Once more a king he strode; 10  
 And heard the tinkling caravans  
 Descend the mountain road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen  
 Among her children stand;  
 They clasped his neck, they kissed his  
 cheeks,  
 They held him by the hand! —  
 A tear burst from the sleeper's lids  
 And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode  
 Along the Niger's bank; 20  
 His bridle-reins were golden chains,  
 And, with a martial clank,  
 At each leap he could feel his scabbard of  
 steel  
 Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,  
 The bright flamingoes flew;  
 From morn till night he followed their  
 flight,  
 O'er plains where the tamarind grew,  
 Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,  
 And the ocean rose to view. 30

At night he heard the lion roar,  
 And the hyena scream,  
 And the river-horse, as he crushed the  
 reeds  
 Beside some hidden stream;  
 And it passed, like a glorious roll of  
 drums,  
 Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,  
 Shouted of liberty;  
 And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,  
 With a voice so wild and free, 40  
 That he started in his sleep and smiled  
 At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,  
 Nor the burning heat of day;  
 For Death had illumined the Land of  
 Sleep,  
 And his lifeless body lay  
 A worn-out fetter, that the soul  
 Had broken and thrown away!  
 1842. 1842.

## THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD<sup>1</sup>

THIS is the Arsenal. From floor to ceil-  
 ing,  
 Like a huge organ, rise the burnished  
 arms;  
 But from their silent pipes no anthem peal-  
 ing  
 Startles the villages with strange alarms.

Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and  
 dreary,  
 When the death-angel touches those  
 swift keys!  
 What loud lament and dismal Miserere  
 Will mingle with their awful sympho-  
 nies!

I hear even now the infinite fierce cho-  
 rus,  
 The cries of agony, the endless groan, 10  
 Which, through the ages that have gone  
 before us,  
 In long reverberations reach our own.

On helm and harness rings the Saxon ham-  
 mer,  
 Through Cimbric forest roars the Norse-  
 man's song,  
 And loud, amid the universal clamor,  
 O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar  
 gong.

I hear the Florentine, who from his pal-  
 ace  
 Wheels out his battle-bell with dreadful  
 din,  
 And Aztec priests upon their teocallis  
 Beat the wild war-drums made of ser-  
 pent's skin; 20

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow was married to Frances Appleton in 1843. On their wedding journey Mr. and Mrs. Longfellow visited the Arsenal at Springfield, in company with Charles Sumner. This visit, and the origin of the poem, are described in the *Life*: "While Mr. Sumner was endeavoring to impress upon the attendant that the money expended upon these weapons of war would have been much better spent upon a great library, Mrs. Longfellow pleased her husband by remarking how like an organ looked the ranged and shining gun-barrels which covered the walls from floor to ceiling, and suggesting what mournful music Death would bring from them. "We grew quite warlike against war," she wrote, "and I urged H. to write a peace poem." From this hint came "The Arsenal at Springfield," written some months later." See also Lowell's *Letters*, vol. I, p. 140, letter of Aug. 13, 1845. (Vol. II. pp. 2, 3.)

The tumult of each sacked and burning  
village;  
The shout that every prayer for mercy  
drowns;  
The soldiers' revels in the midst of pil-  
lage;  
The wail of famine in beleaguered  
towns;

The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched  
asunder,  
The rattling musketry, the clashing  
blade;  
And ever and anon, in tones of thunder  
The diapason of the cannonade.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,  
With such accursed instruments as  
these,  
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly  
voices,  
And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

Were half the power that fills the world  
with terror,  
Were half the wealth bestowed on  
camps and courts,  
Given to redeem the human mind from  
error,  
There were no need of arsenals or forts:

The warrior's name would be a name ab-  
horred!  
And every nation, that should lift again  
Its hand against a brother, on its fore-  
head  
Would wear forevermore the curse of  
Cain!

Down the dark future, through long gener-  
ations,  
The echoing sounds grow fainter and  
then cease;  
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibra-  
tions,  
I hear once more the voice of Christ say,  
'Peace!'

Peace! and no longer from its brazen por-  
tals  
The blast of War's great organ shakes  
the skies!  
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,  
The holy melodies of love arise.

1844.

1844.

THE DAY IS DONE<sup>1</sup>

THE day is done, and the darkness  
Falls from the wings of Night,  
As a feather is wafted downward  
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village  
Gleam through the rain and the mist,  
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me  
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,  
That is not akin to pain,  
And resembles sorrow only  
As the mist resembles the rain.

10

Come, read to me some poem,  
Some simple and heartfelt lay,  
That shall soothe this restless feeling,  
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,  
Not from the bards sublime,  
Whose distant footsteps echo  
Through the corridors of Time.

20

For, like strains of martial music,  
Their mighty thoughts suggest  
Life's endless toil and endeavor;  
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,  
Whose songs gushed from his heart,  
As showers from the clouds of summer,  
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,  
And nights devoid of ease,  
Still heard in his soul the music  
Of wonderful melodies.

30

Such songs have power to quiet  
The restless pulse of care,  
And come like the benediction  
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume  
The poem of thy choice,  
And lend to the rhyme of the poet  
The beauty of thy voice.

40

<sup>1</sup> Originally written as the proem to a volume of se-  
lections from minor poets, called *The Wais*, and edited  
by Longfellow.



And the night shall be filled with music,  
And the cares, that infest the day,  
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
And as silently steal away.

1844.

1844.

## SEAWEED

WHEN descends on the Atlantic  
The gigantic  
Storm-wind of the equinox,  
Landward in his wrath he scourges  
The toiling surges,  
Laden with seaweed from the rocks:

From Bermuda's reefs; from edges  
Of sunken ledges,  
In some far-off, bright Azore;  
From Bahama, and the dashing,  
Silver-flashing  
Surges of San Salvador;

10

From the tumbling surf, that buries  
The Orkneyan skerries,  
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;  
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting  
Spars, uplifting  
On the desolate, rainy seas; —

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting  
On the shifting  
Currents of the restless main;  
Till in sheltered coves, and reaches  
Of sandy beaches,  
All have found repose again.

20

So when storms of wild emotion  
Strike the ocean  
Of the poet's soul, erelong  
From each cave and rocky fastness,  
In its vastness,  
Floats some fragment of a song:

30

From the far-off isles enchanted,  
Heaven has planted  
With the golden fruit of Truth;  
From the flashing surf, whose vision  
Gleams Elysian  
In the tropic clime of Youth;

From the strong Will, and the Endeavor  
That forever  
Wrestle with the tides of Fate;

From the wreck of Hopes far-scattered,  
Tempest-shattered,  
Floating waste and desolate; —

41

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting  
On the shifting  
Currents of the restless heart;  
Till at length in books recorded,  
They, like hoarded  
Household words, no more depart.

1844.

1845.

NUREMBERG<sup>1</sup>

IN the valley of the Pegnitz, where across  
broad meadow-lands  
Rise the blue Franconian mountains, Nu-  
remberg, the ancient, stands.

Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint  
old town of art and song,  
Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like  
the rooks that round them throng:

Memories of the Middle Ages, when the  
emperors, rough and bold,  
Had their dwelling in thy castle, time-  
defying, centuries old;

And thy brave and thrifty burghers boasted,  
in their uncouth rhyme,  
That their great imperial city stretched its  
hand through every clime.<sup>2</sup>

In the court-yard of the castle, bound with  
many an iron band,  
Stands the mighty linden planted by Queen  
Cunigunde's hand;

10

<sup>1</sup> This poem is typical of the impressions which Longfellow received from travel in Europe, as expressed in the *Belfry of Bruges* volume and elsewhere. The prose material of the poem is to be found in a letter of September 24, 1842, to the German poet Freiligrath: —

'Without any doubt, I am in the ancient city of Nürnberg. I arrived last night at ten o'clock, and took my first view by moonlight, strolling alone through the broad, silent streets, and listening to the musical bells that ever and anon gave a hint that it was bedtime.

'To-day has been a busy, exciting day. I have seen the best works of Albrecht Dürer, Peter Vischer, and other worthies of Nürnberg. I have seen Dürer's house and his grave; also those of Hans Sachs. The old shoemaker's house is now an ale-house. His portrait is on the sign of the door, with this inscription: '*Gasthaus zum Hans Sachs.*' . . .

<sup>2</sup> An old popular proverb of the town runs thus: —

*Nürnberg's Hand  
Geht durch alle Land.*

Nuremberg's hand  
Goes through every land. (LONGFELLOW.)

On the square the oriel window, where in  
old heroic days  
Sat the poet Melchior singing Kaiser Maxi-  
milian's praise.<sup>1</sup>

Everywhere I see around me rise the won-  
drous world of Art:  
Fountains wrought with richest sculpture  
standing in the common mart;

And above cathedral doorways saints and  
bishops carved in stone,<sup>2</sup>  
By a former age commissioned as apostles  
to our own.

In the church of sainted Sebald sleeps en-  
shrined his holy dust,<sup>3</sup>  
And in bronze the Twelve Apostles guard  
from age to age their trust;

In the church of sainted Lawrence stands a  
pix of sculpture rare,<sup>4</sup>  
Like the foamy sheaf of fountains, rising  
through the painted air. 20

Here, when Art was still religion, with a  
simple, reverent heart,  
Lived and labored Albrecht Dürer, the  
Evangelist of Art;

Hence in silence and in sorrow, toiling still  
with busy hand,  
Like an emigrant he wandered, seeking for  
the Better Land.

*Emigravit* is the inscription on the tomb-  
stone where he lies;  
Dead he is not, but departed, — for the  
artist never dies.

Fairer seems the ancient city, and the sun-  
shine seems more fair,  
That he once has trod its pavement, that  
he once has breathed its air!

<sup>1</sup> Melchior Pfinsing was one of the most celebrated German poets of the sixteenth century. The hero of his *Teuerdant* was the reigning Emperor, Maximilian; and the poem was to the Germans of that day what the *Orlando Furioso* was to the Italians. (LONGFELLOW.)

<sup>2</sup> The tomb of Saint Sebald, in the church which bears his name, is one of the richest works of art in Nuremberg. It is of bronze, and was cast by Peter Vischer and his sons, who labored upon it thirteen years. It is adorned with nearly one hundred figures, among which those of the Twelve Apostles are conspicuous for size and beauty. (LONGFELLOW.)

<sup>3</sup> This pix, or tabernacle for the vessels of the sacrament, is by the hand of Adam Kraft. It is an exquisite

Through these streets so broad and stately,  
these obscure and dismal lanes,  
Walked of yore the Mastersingers, chant-  
ing rude poetic strains. 30

From remote and sunless suburbs came  
they to the friendly guild,  
Building nests in Fame's great temple, as  
in spouts the swallows build.

As the weaver plied the shuttle, wove he  
too the mystic rhyme,  
And the smith his iron measures hammered  
to the anvil's chime;

Thanking God, whose boundless wisdom  
makes the flowers of poesy bloom  
In the forge's dust and cinders, in the tis-  
sues of the loom.

Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, laureate  
of the gentle craft,  
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters, in  
huge folios sang and laughed.<sup>4</sup>

But his house is now an ale-house, with a  
nicely sanded floor,  
And a garland in the window, and his face  
above the door; 40

Painted by some humble artist, as in Adam  
Puschman's song,<sup>5</sup>  
As the old man gray and dove-like, with  
his great beard white and long.

And at night the swart mechanic comes to  
drown his cark and care,  
Quaffing ale from pewter tankards, in the  
master's antique chair.

place of sculpture in white stone, and rises to the height of sixty-four feet. It stands in the choir, whose richly painted windows cover it with varied colors. (LONGFELLOW.)

<sup>4</sup> The Twelve Wise Masters was the title of the original corporation of the Mastersingers. Hans Sachs, the cobbler of Nuremberg, though not one of the original Twelve, was the most renowned of the Mastersingers, as well as the most voluminous. He flourished in the sixteenth century; and left behind him thirty-four folio volumes of manuscript, containing two hundred and eight plays, one thousand and seven hundred comic tales, and between four and five thousand lyric poems. (LONGFELLOW.)

<sup>5</sup> Adam Puschman, in his poem on the death of Hans Sachs, describes him as he appeared in a vision:—

An old man,  
Gray and white, and dove-like,  
Who had, in sooth, a great beard,  
And read in a fair, great book,  
Beautiful with golden clasps.

(LONGFELLOW.)

Vanished is the ancient splendor, and be-  
fore my dreamy eye  
Wave these mingled shapes and figures,  
like a faded tapestry.

Not thy Councils, not thy Kaisers, win for  
thee the world's regard;  
But thy painter, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans  
Sachs thy cobbler bard.

Thus, O Nuremberg, a wanderer from a  
region far away,  
As he paced thy streets and court-yards,  
sang in thought his careless lay: 50

Gathering from the pavement's crevice, as  
a floweret of the soil,  
The nobility of labor, — the long pedigree  
of toil.

1844.

1844.

## THE BELFRY OF BRUGES

### CARILLON

IN the ancient town of Bruges,  
In the quaint old Flemish city,  
As the evening shades descended,  
Low and loud and sweetly blended,  
Low at times and loud at times,  
And changing like a poet's rhymes,  
Rang the beautiful wild chimes  
From the Belfry in the market  
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

Then, with deep sonorous clangor 10  
Calmly answering their sweet anger,  
When the wrangling bells had ended,  
Slowly struck the clock eleven,  
And, from out the silent heaven,  
Silence on the town descended.  
Silence, silence everywhere,  
On the earth and in the air,  
Save that footsteps here and there  
Of some burgher home returning,  
By the street lamps faintly burning, 20  
For a moment woke the echoes  
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

But amid my broken slumbers  
Still I heard those magic numbers,  
As they loud proclaimed the flight  
And stolen marches of the night;  
Till their chimes in sweet collision  
Mingled with each wandering vision,

Mingled with the fortune-telling  
Gypsy-bands of dreams and fancies, 30  
Which amid the waste expanses  
Of the silent land of trances  
Have their solitary dwelling;  
All else seemed asleep in Bruges,  
In the quaint old Flemish city.

And I thought how like these chimes  
Are the poet's airy rhymes,  
All his rhymes and roundelays,  
His conceits, and songs, and ditties, 40  
From the belfry of his brain,  
Scattered downward, though in vain,  
On the roofs and stones of cities!  
For by night the drowsy ear  
Under its curtains cannot hear,  
And by day men go their ways,  
Hearing the music as they pass,  
But deeming it no more, alas!  
Than the hollow sound of brass.  
Yet perchance a sleepless wight,  
Lodging at some humble inn 50  
In the narrow lanes of life,  
When the dusk and hush of night  
Shut out the incessant din  
Of daylight and its toil and strife,  
May listen with a calm delight  
To the poet's melodies,  
Till he hears, or dreams he hears,  
Intermingled with the song,  
Thoughts that he has cherished long;  
Hears amid the chime and singing 60  
The bells of his own village ringing,  
And wakes, and finds his slumberous eyes  
Wet with most delicious tears.

Thus dreamed I, as by night I lay  
In Bruges, at the Fleur-de-Blé,  
Listening with a wild delight  
To the chimes that, through the night,  
Rang their changes from the Belfry  
Of that quaint old Flemish city.

1845.

1845.<sup>1</sup>

### DANTE

TUSCAN, that wanderest through the realms  
of gloom,  
With thoughtful pace, and sad, majestic  
eyes,

<sup>1</sup> The *Belfry of Bruges* volume bears the date 1846, and is listed as of that year in the bibliographies of Longfellow and in at least two books on the first editions of American authors; but it was actually published on December 23, 1845.

Stern thoughts and awful from thy soul  
 arise,  
 Like Farinata from his fiery tomb.  
 Thy sacred song is like the trump of  
 doom;  
 Yet in thy heart what human sympathies,  
 What soft compassion glows; as in the  
 skies  
 The tender stars their clouded lamps re-  
 lume!  
 Methinks I see thee stand with pallid  
 cheeks  
 By Fra Hilariño in his diocese,  
 As up the convent-walls, in golden streaks,  
 The ascending sunbeams mark the day's  
 decrease;  
 And, as he asks what there the stranger  
 seeks,  
 Thy voice along the cloister whispers  
 'Peace!'

1843?

1845.

THE BRIDGE<sup>1</sup>

I stood on the bridge at midnight,  
 As the clocks were striking the hour,  
 And the moon rose o'er the city,  
 Behind the dark church-tower.

I saw her bright reflection  
 In the waters under me,  
 Like a golden goblet falling  
 And sinking into the sea.<sup>2</sup>

And far in the hazy distance  
 Of that lovely night in June,  
 The blaze of the flaming furnace  
 Gleamed redder than the moon.

10

Among the long, black rafters  
 The wavering shadows lay,  
 And the current that came from the ocean  
 Seemed to lift and bear them away;

<sup>1</sup> Called 'The Bridge over the Charles,' in Longfellow's *Journal*, Oct. 9, 1845. In an earlier passage of his *Journal*, March 15, 1838, he speaks of his delight in walking to and from Boston, and says: 'I always stop on the bridge; tide-waters are beautiful. From the ocean up into the land they go, like messengers, to ask why the tribute has not been paid. The brooks and rivers answer that there has been little harvest of snow and rain this year.' *Life*, vol. i, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> An excellent example of the 'literary' character of Longfellow's inspiration. This is evidently a reminiscence of the German ballads, not of anything seen or conceived by the poet himself.

As, sweeping and eddying through them,  
 Rose the belated tide,  
 And, streaming into the moonlight,  
 The seaweed floated wide.

20

And like those waters rushing  
 Among the wooden piers,  
 A flood of thoughts came o'er me  
 That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, oh how often,  
 In the days that had gone by,  
 I had stood on that bridge at midnight  
 And gazed on that wave and sky!

How often, oh how often,  
 I had wished that the ebbing tide  
 Would bear me away on its bosom  
 O'er the ocean wild and wide!

30

For my heart was hot and restless,  
 And my life was full of care,  
 And the burden laid upon me  
 Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,  
 It is buried in the sea;  
 And only the sorrow of others  
 Throws its shadow over me.

40

Yet whenever I cross the river  
 On its bridge with wooden piers,  
 Like the odor of brine from the ocean  
 Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands  
 Of care-encumbered men,  
 Each bearing his burden of sorrow,  
 Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession  
 Still passing to and fro,  
 The young heart hot and restless,  
 And the old subdued and slow!

50

And forever and forever,  
 As long as the river flows,  
 As long as the heart has passions,  
 As long as life has woes;

The moon and its broken reflection  
 And its shadows shall appear,  
 As the symbol of love in heaven,  
 And its wavering image here.

60

1845.

1845.

## THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS<sup>1</sup>

SOMEWHAT back from the village street  
 Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.  
 Across its antique portico  
 Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw;  
 And from its station in the hall  
 An ancient timepiece says to all, —  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

Half-way up the stairs it stands,  
 And points and beckons with its hands 10  
 From its case of massive oak,  
 Like a monk, who, under his cloak,  
 Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!  
 With sorrowful voice to all who pass, —  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

By day its voice is low and light;  
 But in the silent dead of night,  
 Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,  
 It echoes along the vacant hall, 20  
 Along the ceiling, along the floor,  
 And seems to say, at each chamber-door, —  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,  
 Through days of death and days of birth,  
 Through every swift vicissitude  
 Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,  
 And as if, like God, it all things saw,  
 It calmly repeats those words of awe, — 30  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

In that mansion used to be  
 Free-hearted Hospitality;  
 His great fires up the chimney roared;

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow wrote in his *Journal* under the date of November 12, 1845: 'Began a poem on a clock, with the words "Forever, never," as the burden; suggested by the words of Bridaine, the old French missionary, who said of eternity, *C'est une pendule dont le balancier dit et redit sans cesse ces deux mots seulement dans le silence des tombeaux, — Toujours, jamais! Jamais, toujours!* Et pendant ces effrayables révolutions, un réprouvé s'écrie, "Quelle heure est-il?" et la voix d'un autre misérable lui répond, "L'Eternité."' "

The 'old-fashioned country-seat,' where the clock stood, is in Pittsfield, Mass. Mr. and Mrs. Longfellow visited it on their wedding journey in 1843. (*Life*, vol. ii, pp. 2, 24, 25.) The house belonged to relatives of Mrs. Longfellow, and when it was sold in 1853, the 'old clock' was alone reserved by the family. (*Life*, vol. ii, p. 259.)

The stranger feasted at his board;  
 But, like the skeleton at the feast,  
 That warning timepiece never ceased, —  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

40

There groups of merry children played,  
 There youths and maidens dreaming  
     strayed;  
 O precious hours! O golden prime.  
 And affluence of love and time!  
 Even as a miser counts his gold,  
 Those hours the ancient timepiece told, —  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

From that chamber, clothed in white,  
 The bride came forth on her wedding  
     night; 50  
 There, in that silent room below,  
 The dead lay in his shroud of snow;  
 And in the hush that followed the prayer,  
 Was heard the old clock on the stair, —  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

All are scattered now and fled,  
 Some are married, some are dead;  
 And when I ask, with throbs of pain,  
 'Ah! when shall they all meet again?' 60  
 As in the days long since gone by,  
 The ancient timepiece makes reply, —  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

Never here, forever there,  
 Where all parting, pain, and care,  
 And death, and time shall disappear, —  
 Forever there, but never here!  
 The horologe of Eternity  
 Sayeth this incessantly, — 70  
     'Forever — never!  
     Never — forever!'

1845.

1845.

## THE ARROW AND THE SONG

I SHOT an arrow into the air,  
 It fell to earth, I knew not where;  
 For, so swiftly it flew, the sight  
 Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,  
 It fell to earth, I knew not where;

For who has sight so keen and strong,  
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak  
I found the arrow, still unbroke;  
And the song, from beginning to end,  
I found again in the heart of a friend.

1845.

1845.

CURFEW<sup>1</sup>

## I

SOLEMNLY, mournfully,  
Dealing its dole,  
The Curfew Bell  
Is beginning to toll.

Cover the embers,  
And put out the light;  
Toil comes with the morning,  
And rest with the night.

Dark grow the windows,  
And quenched is the fire;  
Sound fades into silence, —  
All footsteps retire.

No voice in the chambers,  
No sound in the hall!  
Sleep and oblivion  
Reign over all!

## II

The book is completed,  
And closed, like the day;  
And the hand that has written it  
Lays it away.

Dim grow its fancies;  
Forgotten they lie;  
Like coals in the ashes,  
They darken and die.

Song sinks into silence,  
The story is told,  
The windows are darkened,  
The hearth-stone is cold.

Darker and darker  
The black shadows fall;  
Sleep and oblivion  
Reign over all.

1845.

1845.

EVANGELINE<sup>2</sup>

## A TALE OF ACADIE

THIS is the forest primeval. The murmur-  
ing pines and the hemlocks,  
Bearded with moss, and in garments green,  
indistinct in the twilight,

<sup>1</sup> The concluding poem in the *Belfry of Bruges* volume.

<sup>2</sup> The origin of 'Evangeline' is described as follows in the *Life of Longfellow*: 'Mr. Hawthorne came one day to dine at Craigie House, bringing with him his friend Mr. H. L. Conolly, who had been the rector of a church in South Boston. At dinner Conolly said that he had been trying in vain to interest Hawthorne to write a story upon an incident which had been related to him by a parishioner of his, Mrs. Haliburton. It was the story of a young Acadian maiden, who at the dispersion of her people by the English troops had been separated from her betrothed lover; they sought each other for years in their exile; and at last they met in a hospital where the lover lay dying. Mr. Longfellow was touched by the story, especially by the constancy of its heroine, and said to his friend, "If you really do not want this incident for a tale, let me have it for a poem;" and Hawthorne consented.' (*Life*, vol. ii, pp. 70-71.)

The account given by Hawthorne is substantially the same, but contains a somewhat fuller outline of the story: 'H. L. C. heard from a French Canadian a story of a young couple in Acadie. On their marriage-day all the men of the Province were summoned to assemble

Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad  
and prophetic,  
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that  
rest on their bosoms.

in the church to hear a proclamation. When assembled, they were all seized and shipped off to be distributed through New England, — among them the new bridegroom. His bride set off in search of him — wandered about New England all her lifetime, and at last, when she was old, she found her bridegroom on his death-bed. The shock was so great that it killed her likewise.' (*American Notebooks*, vol. i, p. 203.)

Another American poet, Whittier, had also thought of writing on the expulsion of the Acadians: 'Before Longfellow considered the matter of writing "Evangeline," Whittier had made a study of the history of the banishment of the Acadians, and had intended to write upon it, but he put it off until he found that Hawthorne was thinking about it, and had suggested it to Longfellow. After the appearance of "Evangeline," Mr. Whittier was glad of his delay, for he said: "Longfellow was just the one to write it. If I had attempted it I should have spoiled the artistic effect of the poem by my indignation at the treatment of the exiles by the Colonial Government."' (Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. i, p. 342). See also Whittier's poem, 'Marguerite,' and the note on it.

Whittier welcomed the 'Evangeline' heartily when it appeared, in a review beginning 'Eureka! Here, then,



Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighboring ocean  
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers  
the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where  
are the hearts that beneath it  
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the  
woodland the voice of the huntsman?

we have it at last, — an American poem, with the lack of which British reviewers have so long reproached us.' (*Prose Works*, vol. iii, p. 365.)

The historical basis which Longfellow used for his poem was somewhat scanty: 'For the history of the dispersion of the Acadians the poet read such books as were attainable; Haliburton, for instance, with his quotations from the Abbé Raynal. . . . Later investigations and more recent publications have shown that the deportation had more justification than had been supposed; that some, at least, of the Acadians, so far from being innocent sufferers, had been troublesome subjects of Great Britain, — fomenting insubordination and giving help to the enemy. But if the expatriation was necessary, it was none the less cruel, and involved in suffering many who were innocent of wrong.' (*Life of Longfellow*, vol. ii, p. 71.)

The exact title of Haliburton's book spoken of above is *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*. See also, on the poem, its subject, and its historical basis: *Life*, vol. ii, pp. 26-140.

Hannay (James), *The History of Acadia*.

Journal of Colonel John Winslow, in the *Report and Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, iii, 71-196.

Gayarré, *The History of Louisiana*.

Anderson (William James), 'Evangeline' and 'The Archives of Nova Scotia;' or, the Poetry and Prose of History. Quebec, 1870.

Porter (Noah), *Evangeline, the place, the story, and the poem*. New York, 1882.

Saylor (H. L.) *The Real Evangeline*. In the *Bookman*, vol. xviii, p. 12; September, 1903.

Whittier: *Prose Works*, vol. iii, pp. 365-373.

Charles (Philarète), *Etudes sur la Littérature et les Mœurs des Anglo-américains au XIX<sup>ème</sup> Siècle*, 1851.

Longfellow himself never visited either Nova Scotia or the Mississippi. He actually seems to have got some of his conceptions from a diorama of the Mississippi exhibited in Boston, which he eagerly went to see while writing the poem! (*Life*, vol. ii, pp. 67-68.) He also, as seems to be probable from letters recently published in the *New York Times* (February and March, 1905) wrote to Mr. Édouard Simon of St. Martinsville, a former student at the Harvard law school, with whom he had discussed the expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia and their settlement in Louisiana, and obtained from him a description of the country along the Mississippi where they settled.

It may also be suggested that he probably obtained some inspiration, and perhaps a great deal, from Chateaubriand's descriptions of America, especially of the primeval forests and the country along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, in his *Atala*, *René*, and *Voyages*. Longfellow was reading Chateaubriand, and with enthusiasm, just at the time when he began to write 'Evangeline.' (*Life*, vol. ii, p. 27.)

The metre of 'Evangeline' has been much discussed. See the *Life of Longfellow*, vol. ii, pp. 26, 36, 68, 76, 107, etc.; Stedman's *Poets of America*, pp. 195-200; Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. ii, p. 75, and Lowell's 'Fable for Critics'; Holmes's verdict, quoted in the *Life of Longfellow*, vol. iii, pp. 339-340; and Matthew Arnold's essays *On Translating Homer*.

Where is the thatch-roofed village, the  
home of Acadian farmers, —  
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that  
water the woodlands,  
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting  
an image of heaven?  
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the  
farmers forever departed!  
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the  
mighty blasts of October  
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and  
sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.  
Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful  
village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes,  
and endures, and is patient,  
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength  
of woman's devotion,  
List to the mournful tradition, still sung by  
the pines of the forest;  
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of  
the happy.

## PART THE FIRST

### I

IN the Acadian land, on the shores of the  
Basin of Minas,  
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of  
Grand Pré  
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows  
stretched to the eastward,  
Giving the village its name, and pasture to  
flocks without number.  
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had  
raised with labor incessant,  
Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated  
seasons the flood-gates  
Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander  
at will o'er the meadows.  
West and south there were fields of flax,  
and orchards and cornfields  
Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain;  
and away to the northward  
Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and  
aloft on the mountains  
Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from  
the mighty Atlantic  
Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from  
their station descended.  
There, in the midst of its farms, reposed  
the Acadian village.



Strongly built were the houses, with frames  
 of oak and of hemlock,  
 Such as the peasants of Normandy built in  
 the reign of the Henries.  
 Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-win-  
 dows; and gables projecting  
 Over the basement below protected and  
 shaded the doorway.  
 There in the tranquil evenings of summer,  
 when brightly the sunset  
 Lighted the village street, and gilded the  
 vanes on the chimneys,  
 Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white  
 caps and in kirtles<sup>20</sup>  
 Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs  
 spinning the golden  
 Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy  
 shuttles within doors  
 Mingled their sounds with the whir of the  
 wheels and the songs of the maidens.  
 Solemnly down the street came the parish  
 priest, and the children  
 Paused in their play to kiss the hand he  
 extended to bless them.  
 Reverend walked he among them; and up  
 rose matrons and maidens,  
 Hailing his slow approach with words of  
 affectionate welcome.  
 Then came the laborers home from the  
 field, and serenely the sun sank  
 Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed.  
 Anon from the belfry  
 Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the  
 roofs of the village<sup>30</sup>  
 Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of  
 incense ascending,  
 Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes  
 of peace and contentment.  
 Thus dwelt together in love these simple  
 Acadian farmers, —  
 Dwelt in the love of God and of man.  
 Alike were they free from  
 Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy,  
 the vice of republics.  
 Neither locks had they to their doors, nor  
 bars to their windows;  
 But their dwellings were open as day and  
 the hearts of the owners;  
 There the richest was poor, and the poorest  
 lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and  
 nearer the Basin of Minas,  
 Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest  
 farmer of Grand-Pré,<sup>40</sup>

Dwelt on his goodly acres; and with him,  
 directing his household,  
 Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the  
 pride of the village.  
 Stalwart and stately in form was the man  
 of seventy winters;  
 Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is cov-  
 ered with snow-flakes;  
 White as the snow were his locks, and his  
 cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.  
 Fair was she to behold, that maiden of sev-  
 enteen summers.  
 Black were her eyes as the berry that grows  
 on the thorn by the wayside,  
 Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath  
 the brown shade of her tresses;  
 Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine  
 that feed in the meadows.  
 When in the harvest heat she bore to the  
 reapers at noontide<sup>50</sup>  
 Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in  
 sooth was the maiden.  
 Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn,  
 while the bell from its turret  
 Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the  
 priest with his hyssop  
 Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters  
 blessings upon them,  
 Down the long street she passed, with her  
 chaplet of beads and her missal,  
 Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle  
 of blue, and the ear-rings,  
 Brought in the olden time from France, and  
 since, as an heirloom,  
 Handed down from mother to child, through  
 long generations.  
 But a celestial brightness — a more ethe-  
 real beauty —  
 Shone on her face and encircled her form,  
 when, after confession,<sup>60</sup>  
 Homeward serenely she walked with God's  
 benediction upon her.  
 When she had passed, it seemed like the  
 ceasing of exquisite music.

Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the  
 house of the farmer  
 Stood on the side of a hill commanding the  
 sea; and a shady  
 Sycamore grew by the door, with a wood-  
 bine wreathing around it.  
 Rudely carved was the porch, with seats  
 beneath; and a footpath  
 Led through an orchard wide, and disap-  
 peared in the meadow.

Under the sycamore-tree were hives over-  
 hung by a penthouse,  
 Such as the traveller sees in regions remote  
 by the roadside,  
 Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed  
 image of Mary. 70  
 Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was  
 the well with its moss-grown  
 Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a  
 trough for the horses.  
 Shielding the house from storms, on the  
 north, were the barns and the farm-  
 yard.  
 There stood the broad-wheeled wains and  
 the antique ploughs and the har-  
 rows;  
 There were the folds for the sheep; and  
 there, in his feathered seraglio,  
 Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the  
 cock, with the selfsame  
 Voice that in ages of old had startled the  
 penitent Peter.  
 Bursting with hay were the barns, them-  
 selves a village. In each one  
 Far o'er the gable projected a roof of  
 thatch; and a staircase,  
 Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the  
 odorous corn-loft. 80  
 There too the dove-cot stood, with its meek  
 and innocent inmates  
 Murmuring ever of love; while above in  
 the variant breezes  
 Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and  
 sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world,  
 the farmer of Grand-Pré  
 Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline  
 governed his household.  
 Many a youth, as he knelt in church and  
 opened his missal,  
 Fixed his eyes upon her as the saint of his  
 deepest devotion;  
 Happy was he who might touch her hand  
 or the hem of her garment!  
 Many a suitor came to her door, by the  
 darkness befriended,  
 And, as he knocked and waited to hear the  
 sound of her footsteps, 90  
 Knew not which beat the louder, his heart  
 or the knocker of iron;  
 Or at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint  
 of the village,  
 Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the  
 dance as he whispered

Hurried words of love, that seemed a part  
 of the music.  
 But, among all who came, young Gabriel  
 only was welcome;  
 Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the  
 blacksmith,  
 Who was a mighty man in the village, and  
 honored of all men;  
 For, since the birth of time, throughout all  
 ages and nations,  
 Has the craft of the smith been held in re-  
 pute by the people.  
 Basil was Benedict's friend. Their children  
 from earliest childhood 100  
 Grew up together as brother and sister; and  
 Father Felician,  
 Priest and pedagogue both in the village,  
 had taught them their letters  
 Out of the selfsame book, with the hymns  
 of the church and the plain-song.  
 But when the hymn was sung, and the daily  
 lesson completed,  
 Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of  
 Basil the blacksmith.  
 There at the door they stood, with wonder-  
 ing eyes to behold him  
 Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the horse  
 as a plaything,  
 Nailing the shoe in its place; while near him  
 the tire of the cart-wheel  
 Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a cir-  
 cle of cinders.  
 Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the  
 gathering darkness 110  
 Bursting with light seemed the smithy,  
 through every cranny and crev-  
 ice,  
 Warm by the forge within they watched  
 the laboring bellows,  
 And as its panting ceased, and the sparks  
 expired in the ashes,  
 Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns  
 going into the chapel.  
 Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the  
 swoop of the eagle,  
 Down the hillside bounding, they glided  
 away o'er the meadow.  
 Oft in the barns they climbed to the popu-  
 lous nests on the rafters,  
 Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous  
 stone, which the swallow  
 Brings from the shore of the sea to restore  
 the sight of its fledglings;  
 Lucky was he who found that stone in the  
 nest of the swallow! 120

Thus passed a few swift years, and they no longer were children.  
 He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the face of the morning,  
 Gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened thought into action.  
 She was a woman now, with the heart and hopes of a woman.  
 'Sunshine of Saint Eulalie' was she called;  
 for that was the sunshine  
 Which, as the farmers believed, would load their orchards with apples;<sup>1</sup>  
 She, too, would bring to her husband's house delight and abundance,  
 Filling it with love and the ruddy faces of children.

## II

Now had the season returned, when the nights grow colder and longer,  
 And the retreating sun the sign of the Scorpion enters.<sup>130</sup>  
 Birds of passage sailed through the leaden air, from the ice-bound,  
 Desolate northern bays to the shores of tropical islands.  
 Harvests were gathered in; and wild with the winds of September  
 Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old with the angel.  
 All the signs foretold a winter long and inclement.  
 Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had hoarded their honey  
 Till the hives overflowed; and the Indian hunters asserted  
 Cold would the winter be, for thick was the fur of the foxes.  
 Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed that beautiful season,  
 Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer of All-Saints!<sup>140</sup>  
 Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape  
 Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.  
 Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless heart of the ocean  
 Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in harmony blended.  
 Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the farm-yards,

Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of pigeons,  
 All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and the great sun  
 Looked with the eye of love through the golden vapors around him;  
 While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet and yellow,  
 Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering tree of the forest<sup>150</sup>  
 Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned with mantles and jewels.<sup>1</sup>

Now recommenced the reign of rest and affection and stillness.  
 Day with its burden and heat had departed, and twilight descending  
 Brought back the evening star to the sky, and the herds to the homestead.  
 Pawing the ground they came, and resting their necks on each other,  
 And with their nostrils distended inhaling the freshness of evening.  
 Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful heifer,  
 Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon that waved from her collar,  
 Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human affection.  
 Then came the shepherd back with his bleating flocks from the seaside,<sup>160</sup>  
 Where was their favorite pasture. Behind them followed the watch-dog,  
 Patient, full of importance, and grand in the pride of his instinct,  
 Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and superbly  
 Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the stragglers;  
 Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept; their protector,  
 When from the forest at night, through the starry silence the wolves howled.  
 Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains from the marshes,  
 Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its odor.  
 Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their manes and their fetlocks,  
 While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and ponderous saddles,<sup>170</sup>  
 Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with tassels of crimson,

<sup>1</sup> From the old Norman-French proverb:—

*Si le soleil rit le jour Sainte-Eulalie  
 Il y aura pommes et cidre à folie.*

See Evelyn's *Silva*, II, 53. (LONGFELLOW.)

Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks  
heavy with blossoms.  
Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and  
yielded their udders  
Unto the milkmaid's hand; whilst loud and  
in regular cadence  
Into the sounding pails the foaming stream-  
lets descended.  
Lowling of cattle and peals of laughter were  
heard in the farm-yard,  
Echoed back by the barns. Anon they  
sank into stillness;  
Heavily closed, with a jarring sound, the  
valves of the barn-doors,  
Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a sea-  
son was silent.

In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed  
fireplace, idly the farmer 180  
Sat in his elbow-chair and watched how the  
flames and the smoke-wreaths  
Struggled together like foes in a burning  
city. Behind him,  
Nodding and mocking along the wall, with  
gestures fantastic,  
Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished  
away into darkness.  
Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back  
of his arm-chair  
Laughed in the flickering light; and the  
pewter plates on the dresser  
Caught and reflected the flame, as shields  
of armies the sunshine.  
Fragments of song the old man sang, and  
carols of Christmas,  
Such as at home, in the olden time, his  
fathers before him  
Sang in their Norman orchards and bright  
Burgundian vineyards. 190  
Close at her father's side was the gentle  
Evangeline seated,  
Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in  
the corner behind her.  
Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was  
its diligent shuttle,  
While the monotonous drone of the wheel,  
like the drone of a bagpipe,  
Followed the old man's song and united the  
fragments together.  
As in a church, when the chant of the choir  
at intervals ceases,  
Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words  
of the priest at the altar,  
So, in each pause of the song, with mea-  
sured motion the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps  
heard, and, suddenly lifted,  
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door  
swung back on its hinges. 200  
Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it  
was Basil the blacksmith,  
And by her beating heart Evangeline knew  
who was with him.  
'Welcome!' the farmer exclaimed, as their  
footsteps paused on the thresh-  
hold,  
'Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come, take  
thy place on the settle  
Close by the chimney-side, which is always  
empty without thee;  
Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and  
the box of tobacco;  
Never so much thyself art thou as when  
through the curling  
Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy friendly  
and jovial face gleams  
Round and red as the harvest moon through  
the mist of the marshes.'  
Then, with a smile of content, thus an-  
swered Basil the blacksmith, 210  
Taking with easy air the accustomed seat  
by the fireside:—  
'Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever thy  
jest and thy ballad!  
Ever in cheerfullest mood art thou, when  
others are filled with  
Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin  
before them.  
Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst  
picked up a horseshoe.'  
Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that  
Evangeline brought him,  
And with a coal from the embers had  
lighted, he slowly continued:—  
'Four days now are passed since the Eng-  
lish ships at their anchors  
Ride in the Gaspereau's mouth, with their  
cannon pointed against us.  
What their design may be is unknown; but  
all are commanded 220  
On the morrow to meet in the church,  
where his Majesty's mandate  
Will be proclaimed as law in the land.  
Alas! in the mean time  
Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of  
the people.'  
Then made answer the farmer: 'Perhaps  
some friendlier purpose  
Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps  
the harvests in England

By untimely rains or untimelier heat have  
 been blighted,  
 And from our bursting barns they would  
 feed their cattle and children.'  
 'Not so thinketh the folk in the village,'  
 said, warmly, the blacksmith,  
 Shaking his head, as in doubt; then, heav-  
 ing a sigh, he continued : —  
 'Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau Sé-  
 jour, nor Port Royal. <sup>230</sup>  
 Many already have fled to the forest, and  
 lurk on its outskirts,  
 Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious  
 fate of to-morrow.  
 Arms have been taken from us, and war-  
 like weapons of all kinds;  
 Nothing is left but the blacksmith's sledge  
 and the scythe of the mower.'  
 Then with a pleasant smile made answer the  
 jovial farmer : —  
 'Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our  
 flocks and our cornfields,  
 Safer within these peaceful dikes, besieged  
 by the ocean,  
 Than our fathers in forts, besieged by the  
 enemy's cannon.  
 Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night may  
 no shadow of sorrow  
 Fall on this house and earth; for this is the  
 night of the contract. <sup>240</sup>  
 Built are the house and the barn. The  
 merry lads of the village  
 Strongly have built them and well; and,  
 breaking the glebe round about them,  
 Filled the barn with hay, and the house  
 with food for a twelvemonth.  
 René Leblanc will be here anon, with his  
 papers and inkhorn.  
 Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the  
 joy of our children ?'  
 As apart by the window she stood, with her  
 hand in her lover's,  
 Blushing Evangeline heard the words that  
 her father had spoken,  
 And, as they died on his lips, the worthy  
 notary entered.

## III

Bent like a laboring oar, that toils in the  
 surf of the ocean,  
 Bent, but not broken, by age was the form  
 of the notary public; <sup>250</sup>  
 Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss  
 of the maize, hung

Over his shoulders; his forehead was high;  
 and glasses with horn bows  
 Sat astride on his nose, with a look of wis-  
 dom supernal.  
 Father of twenty children was he, and more  
 than a hundred  
 Children's children rode on his knee, and  
 heard his great watch tick.  
 Four long years in the times of the war had  
 he languished a captive,  
 Suffering much in an old French fort as the  
 friend of the English.  
 Now, though warier grown, without all  
 guile or suspicion,  
 Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and  
 simple, and childlike.  
 He was beloved by all, and most of all by  
 the children; <sup>260</sup>  
 For he told them tales of the Loup-garou  
 in the forest,  
 And of the goblin that came in the night to  
 water the horses,  
 And of the white Létiche, the ghost of a  
 child who unchristened  
 Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the  
 chambers of children;  
 And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked  
 in the stable,  
 And how the fever was cured by a spider  
 shut up in a nutshell,  
 And of the marvellous powers of four-  
 leaved clover and horseshoes,  
 With whatsoever else was writ in the lore  
 of the village.  
 Then up rose from his seat by the fireside  
 Basil the blacksmith,  
 Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and slowly  
 extending his right hand, <sup>270</sup>  
 'Father Leblanc,' he exclaimed, 'thou  
 hast heard the talk in the vil-  
 lage,  
 And, perchance, canst tell us some news of  
 these ships and their errand.'  
 Then with modest demeanor made answer  
 the notary public, —  
 'Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet  
 am never the wiser;  
 And what their errand may be I know not  
 better than others.  
 Yet am I not of those who imagine some  
 evil intention  
 Brings them here, for we are at peace; and  
 why then molest us ?'  
 'God's name !' shouted the hasty and  
 somewhat irascible blacksmith;

'Must we in all things look for the how,  
 and the why, and the where-  
 fore?  
 Daily injustice is done, and might is the  
 right of the strongest!' 280  
 But without heeding his warmth, continued  
 the notary public, —  
 'Man is unjust, but God is just; and finally  
 justice  
 Triumphs; and well I remember a story,  
 that often consoled me,  
 When as a captive I lay in the old French  
 fort at Port Royal.'  
 This was the old man's favorite tale, and  
 he loved to repeat it  
 When his neighbors complained that any  
 injustice was done them.  
 'Once in an ancient city, whose name I no  
 longer remember,  
 Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue  
 of Justice  
 Stood in the public square, upholding the  
 scales in its left hand,  
 And in its right a sword, as an emblem that  
 justice presided 290  
 Over the laws of the land, and the hearts  
 and homes of the people.  
 Even the birds had built their nests in the  
 scales of the balance,  
 Having no fear of the sword that flashed in  
 the sunshine above them.  
 But in the course of time the laws of the  
 land were corrupted;  
 Might took the place of right, and the weak  
 were oppressed, and the mighty  
 Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced  
 in a nobleman's palace  
 That a necklace of pearls was lost, and ere-  
 long a suspicion  
 Fell on an orphan girl who lived as a maid  
 in the household.  
 She, after form of trial condemned to die  
 on the scaffold,  
 Patiently met her doom at the foot of the  
 statue of Justice. 300  
 As to her Father in heaven her innocent  
 spirit ascended,  
 Lo! o'er the city a tempest rose; and the  
 bolts of the thunder  
 Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in  
 wrath from its left hand  
 Down on the pavement below the clattering  
 scales of the balance,  
 And in the hollow thereof was found the  
 nest of a magpie,

Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of  
 pearls was inwoven.'  
 Silenced, but not convinced, when the story  
 was ended, the blacksmith  
 Stood like a man who fain would speak,  
 but findeth no language;  
 All his thoughts were congealed into lines  
 on his face, as the vapors  
 Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-  
 panes in the winter. 310

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp  
 on the table,  
 Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard  
 with home-brewed  
 Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its  
 strength in the village of Grand-  
 Pré;  
 While from his pocket the notary drew his  
 papers and inkhorn,  
 Wrote with a steady hand the date and the  
 age of the parties,  
 Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of  
 sheep and in cattle.  
 Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and  
 well were completed,  
 And the great seal of the law was set like  
 a sun on the margin.  
 Then from his leathern pouch the farmer  
 threw on the table  
 Three times the old man's fee in solid  
 pieces of silver; 320  
 And the notary rising, and blessing the  
 bride and the bridegroom,  
 Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank  
 to their welfare.  
 Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly  
 bowed and departed,  
 While in silence the others sat and mused  
 by the fireside,  
 Till Evangeline brought the draught-board  
 out of its corner.  
 Soon was the game begun. In friendly  
 contention the old men  
 Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful  
 manœuvre,  
 Laughed when a man was crowned, or a  
 breach was made in the king-  
 row.  
 Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of  
 a window's embrasure,  
 Sat the lovers, and whispered together, be-  
 holding the moon rise 330  
 Over the pallid sea, and the silvery mists  
 of the meadows.



Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows  
of heaven,  
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-  
nots of the angels.

Thus was the evening passed. Anon the  
bell from the belfry  
Rang out the hour of nine, the village cur-  
few, and straightway  
Rose the guests and departed; and silence  
reigned in the household.  
Many a farewell word and sweet good-  
night on the door-step  
Lingered long in Evangeline's heart, and  
filled it with gladness.  
Carefully then were covered the embers  
that glowed on the hearth-stone,  
And on the oaken stairs resounded the  
tread of the farmer. 340  
Soon with a soundless step the foot of  
Evangeline followed.  
Up the staircase moved a luminous space  
in the darkness,  
Lighted less by the lamp than the shining  
face of the maiden.  
Silent she passed the hall, and entered the  
door of her chamber.  
Simple that chamber was, with its curtains  
of white, and its clothes-press  
Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves  
were carefully folded  
Linen and woollen stuffs, by the hand of  
Evangeline woven.  
This was the precious dower she would  
bring to her husband in mar-  
riage,  
Better than flocks and herds, being proofs  
of her skill as a housewife.  
Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the  
mellow and radiant moonlight 350  
Streamed through the windows, and lighted  
the room, till the heart of the  
maiden  
Swelled and obeyed its power, like the  
tremulous tides of the ocean.  
Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold,  
as she stood with  
Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming  
floor of her chamber!  
Little she dreamed that below, among the  
trees of the orchard,  
Waited her lover and watched for the  
gleam of her lamp and her shadow.  
Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times  
a feeling of sadness

Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade of  
clouds in the moonlight  
Flitted across the floor and darkened the  
room for a moment.  
And, as she gazed from the window, she  
saw serenely the moon pass 360  
Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one  
star follow her footsteps,  
As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael  
wandered with Hagar!

## IV

Pleasantly rose next morn the sun on the  
village of Grand Pré.  
Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air  
the Basin of Minas,  
Where the ships, with their wavering sha-  
dows, were riding at anchor.  
Life had long been astir in the village, and  
clamorous labor  
Knocked with its hundred hands at the  
golden gates of the morning.  
Now from the country around, from the  
farms and neighboring hamlets,  
Came in their holiday dresses the blithe  
Acadian peasants.  
Many a glad good-morrow and jocund  
laugh from the young folk 370  
Made the bright air brighter, as up from  
the numerous meadows,  
Where no path could be seen but the track  
of wheels in the greensward,  
Group after group appeared, and joined, or  
passed on the highway.  
Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of  
labor were silenced.  
Thronged were the streets with people; and  
noisy groups at the house-doors  
Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and  
gossipped together.  
Every house was an inn, where all were  
welcomed and feasted;  
For with this simple people, who lived like  
brothers together,  
All things were held in common, and what  
one had was another's.  
Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality seemed  
more abundant: 380  
For Evangeline stood among the guests of  
her father;  
Bright was her face with smiles, and words  
of welcome and gladness  
Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed  
the cup as she gave it.



Under the open sky, in the odorous air of  
the orchard,  
Stript of its golden fruit, was spread the  
feast of betrothal.  
There in the shade of the porch were the  
priest and the notary seated;  
There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil  
the blacksmith.  
Not far withdrawn from these, by the  
cider-press and the beehives,  
Michael the fiddler was placed, with the  
gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.  
Shadow and light from the leaves alter-  
nately played on his snow-white<sup>390</sup>  
Hair, as it waved in the wind; and the jolly  
face of the fiddler  
Glowed like a living coal when the ashes  
are blown from the embers.  
Gayly the old man sang to the vibrant  
sound of his fiddle,  
*Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres*, and *Le*  
*Carillon de Dunquerque*,  
And anon with his wooden shoes beat time  
to the music.  
Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the  
dizzying dances  
Under the orchard-trees and down the path  
to the meadows;  
Old folk and young together, and children  
mingled among them.  
Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline,  
Benedict's daughter!  
Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son  
of the blacksmith!<sup>400</sup>

So passed the morning away. And lo!  
with a summons sonorous  
Sounded the bell from its tower, and over  
the meadows a drum beat.  
Thronged erelong was the church with men.  
Without, in the churchyard,  
Waited the women. They stood by the  
graves, and hung on the headstones  
Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens  
fresh from the forest.  
Then came the guard from the ships, and  
marching proudly among them  
Entered the sacred portal. With loud and  
dissonant clangor  
Echoed the sound of their brazen drums  
from ceiling and casement, —  
Echoed a moment only, and slowly the  
ponderous portal  
Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited  
the will of the soldiers.<sup>410</sup>

Then uprose their commander, and spake  
from the steps of the altar,  
Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals,  
the royal commission.  
'You are convened this day,' he said, 'by  
his Majesty's orders.  
'Clement and kind has he been; but how  
you have answered his kindness,  
Let your own hearts reply! To my nat-  
ural make and my temper  
Painful the task is I do, which to you I  
know must be grievous.  
Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the  
will of our monarch;  
Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings,  
and cattle of all kinds  
Forfeited be to the crown; and that you  
yourselves from this province  
Be transported to other lands. God grant  
you may dwell there<sup>420</sup>  
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and  
peaceable people!  
Prisoners now I declare you; for such is  
his Majesty's pleasure!'  
As, when the air is serene in sultry solstice  
of summer,  
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly  
sling of the hailstones  
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field  
and shatters his windows,  
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground  
with thatch from the house-roofs,  
Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break  
their enclosures;  
So on the hearts of the people descended the  
words of the speaker.  
Silent a moment they stood in speechless  
wonder, and then rose  
Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow  
and anger,<sup>430</sup>  
And, by one impulse moved, they madly  
rushed to the door-way.  
Vain was the hope of escape; and cries and  
fierce imprecations  
Rang through the house of prayer; and  
high o'er the heads of the others  
Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of  
Basil the blacksmith,  
As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the  
billows.  
Flushed was his face and distorted with  
passion; and wildly he shouted, —  
'Down with the tyrants of England!  
we never have sworn them alle-  
giance!

Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize  
on our homes and our harvests !'  
More he fain would have said, but the  
merciless hand of a soldier  
Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged  
him down to the pavement. 440

In the midst of the strife and tumult of  
angry contention,  
Lo ! the door of the chancel opened, and  
Father Felician  
Entered, with serious mien, and ascended  
the steps of the altar.  
Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture  
he awed into silence  
All that clamorous throng; and thus he  
spoke to his people;  
Deep were his tones and solemn; in accents  
measured and mournful  
Spoke he, as, after the tocsin's alarm, dis-  
tinctly the clock strikes.  
'What is this that ye do, my chil-  
dren ? what madness has seized  
you ?  
Forty years of my life have I labored  
among you, and taught you,  
Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one  
another ! 450  
Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils  
and prayers and privations ?  
Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of  
love and forgiveness ?  
This is the house of the Prince of Peace,  
and would you profane it  
Thus with violent deeds and hearts over-  
flowing with hatred ?  
Lo ! where the crucified Christ from his  
cross is gazing upon you !  
See ! in those sorrowful eyes what meek-  
ness and holy compassion !  
Hark ! how those lips still repeat the  
prayer, " O Father, forgive them !"  
Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when  
the wicked assail us,  
Let us repeat it now, and say, " O Father,  
forgive them !"  
Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in  
the hearts of his people 460  
Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded  
the passionate outbreak,  
While they repeated his prayer, and said,  
' O Father, forgive them !'

Then came the evening service. The  
tapers gleamed from the altar.

Fervent and deep was the voice of the  
priest, and the people responded,  
Not with their lips alone, but their hearts;  
and the Ave Maria  
Sang they, and fell on their knees, and  
their souls, with devotion trans-  
lated,  
Rose on the ardor of prayer, like Elijah  
ascending to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the  
tidings of ill, and on all sides  
Wandered, wailing, from house to house  
the women and children.  
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood,  
with her right hand 470  
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of  
the sun, that, descending,  
Lighted the village street with mysterious  
splendor, and roofed each  
Peasant's cottage with golden thatch, and  
emblazoned its windows.  
Long within had been spread the snow-  
white cloth on the table;  
There stood the wheaten loaf, and the  
honey fragrant with wild-flow-  
ers;  
There stood the tankard of ale, and the  
cheese fresh brought from the dairy,  
And, at the head of the board, the great  
arm-chair of the farmer.  
Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's  
door, as the sunset  
Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the  
broad ambrosial meadows.  
Ah ! on her spirit within a deeper shadow  
had fallen, 480  
And from the fields of her soul a fragrance  
celestial ascended, —  
Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and for-  
giveness, and patience !  
Then, all-forgetful of self, she wandered  
into the village,  
Cheering with looks and words the mourn-  
ful hearts of the women,  
As o'er the darkening fields with lingering  
steps they departed,  
Urged by their household cares, and the  
weary feet of their children.  
Down sank the great red sun, and in golden,  
glimmering vapors  
Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet  
descending from Sinai.  
Sweetly over the village the bell of the  
Angelus sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the  
 church Evangeline lingered. <sup>490</sup>  
 All was silent within; and in vain at the  
 door and the windows  
 Stood she, and listened and looked, till,  
 overcome by emotion,  
 'Gabriel !' cried she aloud with tremulous  
 voice; but no answer  
 Came from the graves of the dead, nor the  
 gloomier grave of the living.  
 Slowly at length she returned to the tenant-  
 less house of her father.  
 Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on the  
 board was the supper untasted,  
 Empty and drear was each room, and  
 haunted with phantoms of terror.  
 Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the  
 floor of her chamber.  
 In the dead of the night she heard the dis-  
 consolate rain fall  
 Loud on the withered leaves of the syc-  
 more-tree by the window. <sup>500</sup>  
 Keenly the lightning flashed; and the voice  
 of the echoing thunder  
 Told her that God was in heaven, and gov-  
 erned the world He created !  
 Then she remembered the tale she had  
 heard of the justice of Heaven;  
 Soothed was her troubled soul, and she  
 peacefully slumbered till morning.

## V

Four times the sun had risen and set; and  
 now on the fifth day  
 Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping  
 maids of the farm-house.  
 Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and  
 mournful procession,  
 Came from the neighboring hamlets and  
 farms the Acadian women,  
 Driving in ponderous wains their household  
 goods to the sea-shore,  
 Pausing and looking back to gaze once  
 more on their dwellings, <sup>510</sup>  
 Ere they were shut from sight by the wind-  
 ing road and the woodland.  
 Close at their sides their children ran, and  
 urged on the oxen,  
 While in their little hands they clasped  
 some fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they  
 hurried; and there on the sea-  
 beach

Piled in confusion lay the household goods  
 of the peasants.  
 All day long between the shore and the  
 ships did the boats ply;  
 All day long the wains came laboring down  
 from the village.  
 Late in the afternoon, when the sun was  
 near to his setting,  
 Echoed far o'er the fields came the roll of  
 drums from the churchyard.  
 Thither the women and children thronged.  
 On a sudden the church-doors <sup>520</sup>  
 Opened, and forth came the guard, and  
 marching in gloomy procession  
 Followed the long-imprisoned, but patient,  
 Acadian farmers.  
 Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from  
 their homes and their country,  
 Sing as they go, and in singing forget they  
 are weary and wayworn,  
 So with songs on their lips the Acadian  
 peasants descended  
 Down from the church to the shore, amid  
 their wives and their daughters.  
 Foremost the young men came; and, raising  
 together their voices,  
 Sang with tremulous lips a chant of the  
 Catholic Missions:—  
 'Sacred heart of the Saviour! O inex-  
 haustible fountain!  
 Fill our hearts this day with strength and  
 submission and patience!' <sup>530</sup>  
 Then the old men, as they marched, and the  
 women that stood by the wayside  
 Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds in  
 the sunshine above them  
 Mingled their notes therewith, like voices  
 of spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline  
 waited in silence,  
 Not overcome with grief, but strong in the  
 hour of affliction,—  
 Calmly and sadly she waited, until the pro-  
 cession approached her,  
 And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale  
 with emotion.  
 Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly run-  
 ning to meet him,  
 Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on  
 his shoulder, and whispered,—  
 'Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we love  
 one another <sup>540</sup>  
 Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever  
 mischances may happen!'

Smiling she spake these words; then suddenly paused, for her father  
 Saw she slowly advancing. Alas! how changed was his aspect!  
 Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the fire from his eye, and his footstep  
 Heavier seemed with the weight of the heavy heart in his bosom.  
 But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped his neck and embraced him,  
 Speaking words of endearment where words of comfort availed not.  
 Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth moved on that mournful procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of embarking.  
 Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion  
 Wives were torn from their husbands, and mothers, too late, saw their children  
 Left on the land, extending their arms, with wildest entreaties.  
 So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,  
 While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with her father.  
 Half the task was not done when the sun went down, and the twilight  
 Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the reflux ocean  
 Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-beach  
 Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and the slippery sea-weed.  
 Farther back in the midst of the household goods and the wagons,  
 Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after a battle,  
 All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels near them,  
 Lay encamped for the night the houseless Acadian farmers.  
 Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bellowing ocean,  
 Dragging adown the beach the rattling pebbles, and leaving  
 Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats of the sailors.  
 Then, as the night descended, the herds returned from their pastures;  
 Sweet was the moist still air with the odor of milk from their udders;  
 Lying they waited, and long, at the well-known bars of the farm-yard, —

Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the hand of the milk-maid.  
 Silence reigned in the streets; from the church no Angelus sounded,  
 Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no lights from the windows.

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires had been kindled,  
 Built of the drift-wood thrown on the sands from wrecks in the tempest.  
 Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces were gathered,  
 Voices of women were heard, and of men, and the crying of children.  
 Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth in his parish,  
 Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and blessing and cheering,  
 Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's desolate sea-shore.  
 Thus he approached the place where Evangeline sat with her father,  
 And in the flickering light beheld the face of the old man,  
 Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either thought or emotion,  
 E'en as the face of a clock from which the hands have been taken.  
 Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to cheer him,  
 Vainly offered him food; yet he moved not, he looked not, he spake not,  
 But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flickering fire-light.  
 'Benedicite!' murmured the priest, in tones of compassion.  
 More he fain would have said, but his heart was full, and his accents  
 Faltered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a child on a threshold,  
 Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful presence of sorrow.  
 Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on the head of the maiden,  
 Raising his tearful eyes to the silent stars that above them  
 Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.  
 Then sat he down at her side, and they wept together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in autumn the blood-red

Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven,  
 and o'er the horizon  
 Titan-like stretches its hundred hands upon  
 the mountain and meadow,  
 Seizing the rocks and the rivers and piling  
 huge shadows together.  
 Broader and ever broader it gleamed on  
 the roofs of the village,  
 Gleamed on the sky and sea, and the ships  
 that lay in the roadstead.  
 Columns of shining smoke uprose, and  
 flashes of flame were <sup>600</sup>  
 Thrust through their folds and withdrawn,  
 like the quivering hands of a mar-  
 tyr.  
 Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the  
 burning thatch, and, uplifting,  
 Whirled them aloft through the air, at  
 once from a hundred house-tops  
 Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of  
 flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd  
 on the shore and on shipboard.  
 Speechless at first they stood, then cried  
 aloud in their anguish,  
 'We shall behold no more our homes in  
 the village of Grand-Pré!'  
 Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow  
 in the farm-yards,  
 Thinking the day had dawned; and anon  
 the lowing of cattle  
 Came on the evening breeze, by the bark-  
 ing of dogs interrupted. <sup>610</sup>  
 Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles  
 the sleeping encampments  
 Far in the western prairies or forests that  
 skirt the Nebraska,  
 When the wild horses affrighted sweep  
 by with the speed of the whirl-  
 wind,  
 Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes  
 rush to the river.  
 Such was the sound that arose on the night,  
 as the herds and the horses  
 Broke through their folds and fences, and  
 madly rushed o'er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speech-  
 less, the priest and the maiden  
 Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened  
 and widened before them:  
 And as they turned at length to speak to  
 their silent companion,

Lo! from his seat he had fallen, and  
 stretched abroad on the sea-shore  
 Motionless lay his form, from which the  
 soul had departed. <sup>621</sup>  
 Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head,  
 and the maiden  
 Knelt at her father's side, and wailed aloud  
 in her terror.  
 Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her  
 head on his bosom.  
 Through the long night she lay in deep, ob-  
 livious slumber;  
 And when she awoke from the trance, she  
 beheld a multitude near her.  
 Faces of friends she beheld, that were  
 mournfully gazing upon her,  
 Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of sad-  
 dest compassion.  
 Still the blaze of the burning village illu-  
 mined the landscape,  
 Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed  
 on the faces around her, <sup>630</sup>  
 And like the day of doom it seemed to her  
 wavering senses.  
 Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said  
 to the people,—  
 'Let us bury him here by the sea. When  
 a happier season  
 Brings us again to our homes from the un-  
 known land of our exile,  
 Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid  
 in the churchyard.'  
 Such were the words of the priest. And  
 there in haste by the sea-side,  
 Having the glare of the burning village for  
 funeral torches,  
 But without bell or book, they buried the  
 farmer of Grand-Pré.  
 And as the voice of the priest repeated the  
 service of sorrow,  
 Lo! with a mournful sound, like the voice  
 of a vast congregation, <sup>640</sup>  
 Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its  
 roar with the dirges.  
 'Twas the returning tide, that afar from  
 the waste of the ocean,  
 With the first dawn of the day, came heav-  
 ing and hurrying landward.  
 Then recommenced once more the stir and  
 noise of embarking;  
 And with the ebb of the tide the ships  
 sailed out of the harbor,  
 Leaving behind them the dead on the shore,  
 and the village in ruins.

## PART THE SECOND

## I

**MANY** a weary year had passed since the  
 burning of Grand-Pré,  
 When on the falling tide the freighted ves-  
 sels departed,  
 Bearing a nation, with all its household  
 gods, into exile,  
 Exile without an end, and without an ex-  
 ample in story.  
 Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Aca-  
 dians landed;  
 Scattered were they, like flakes of snow,  
 when the wind from the northeast  
 Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken  
 the Banks of Newfoundland.  
 Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wan-  
 dered from city to city,  
 From the cold lakes of the North to sultry  
 Southern savannas, —  
 From the bleak shores of the sea to the  
 lands where the Father of Waters <sup>10</sup>  
 Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags them  
 down to the ocean,  
 Deep in their sands to bury the scattered  
 bones of the mammoth.  
 Friends they sought and homes; and many,  
 despairing, heart-broken,  
 Asked of the earth but a grave, and no  
 longer a friend nor a fireside.  
 Written their history stands on tablets of  
 stone in the churchyards.  
 Long among them was seen a maiden who  
 waited and wandered,  
 Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently  
 suffering all things.  
 Fair was she and young: but, alas! before  
 her extended,  
 Dreary and vast and silent, the desert of  
 life, with its pathway  
 Marked by the graves of those who had  
 sorrowed and suffered before her, <sup>20</sup>  
 Passions long extinguished, and hopes long  
 dead and abandoned,  
 As the emigrant's way o'er the Western  
 desert is marked by  
 Camp-fires long consumed, and bones that  
 bleach in the sunshine.  
 Something there was in her life incomplete,  
 imperfect, unfinished;  
 As if a morning of June, with all its music  
 and sunshine,  
 Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading,  
 slowly descended

Into the east again, from whence it late had  
 arisen.

Sometimes she lingered in towns, till, urged  
 by the fever within her,  
 Urged by a restless longing, the hunger and  
 thirst of the spirit,  
 She would commence again her endless  
 search and endeavor; <sup>30</sup>  
 Sometimes in churchyards strayed, and  
 gazed on the crosses and tomb-  
 stones,

Sat by some nameless grave, and thought  
 that perhaps in its bosom  
 He was already at rest, and she longed to  
 slumber beside him.

Sometimes a rumor, a hearsay, an inarticu-  
 late whisper,  
 Came with its airy hand to point and beckon  
 her forward.

Sometimes she spake with those who had  
 seen her beloved and known him,  
 But it was long ago, in some far-off place or  
 forgotten.

'Gabriel Lajeunesse!' they said; 'Oh yes!  
 we have seen him.

He was with Basil the blacksmith, and both  
 have gone to the prairies;  
 Coureurs-des-Bois are they, and famous  
 hunters and trappers.' <sup>40</sup>

'Gabriel Lajeunesse!' said others; 'Oh yes!  
 we have seen him.

He is a Voyageur in the lowlands of Louisi-  
 ana.'

Then would they say, 'Dear child! why  
 dream and wait for him longer?

Are there not other youths as fair as Ga-  
 briel? others

Who have hearts as tender and true, and  
 spirits as loyal?

Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary's son,  
 who has loved thee

Many a tedious year; come, give him thy  
 hand and be happy!

Thou art too fair to be left to braid St.  
 Catherine's tresses.' <sup>1</sup>

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely  
 but sadly, 'I cannot!

Whither my heart has gone, there follows  
 my hand, and not elsewhere. <sup>50</sup>

For when the heart goes before, like a lamp,  
 and illumines the pathway,

Many things are made clear, that else lie  
 hidden in darkness.'

<sup>1</sup> There is a common expression in French, '*coiffer  
 Sainte Catherine*,' meaning to be an old maid.



Thereupon the priest, her friend and father-confessor,  
 Said, with a smile, 'O daughter! thy God  
 thus speaketh within thee!  
 Talk not of wasted affection, affection never  
 was wasted;  
 If it enrich not the heart of another, its  
 waters, returning  
 Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill  
 them full of refreshment;  
 That which the fountain sends forth returns  
 again to the fountain.  
 Patience; accomplish thy labor; accomplish  
 thy work of affection!  
 Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient  
 endurance is godlike.  
 Therefore accomplish thy labor of love, till  
 the heart is made godlike,  
 Purified, strengthened, perfected, and ren-  
 dered more worthy of heaven!  
 Cheered by the good man's words, Evange-  
 line labored and waited.  
 Still in her heart she heard the funeral dirge  
 of the ocean,  
 But with its sound there was mingled  
 a voice that whispered, 'Despair  
 not!'  
 Thus did that poor soul wander in want and  
 cheerless discomfort,  
 Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and  
 thorns of existence.  
 Let me essay, O Muse! to follow the wan-  
 derer's footsteps;—  
 Not through each devious path, each change-  
 ful year of existence,  
 But as a traveller follows a streamlet's  
 course through the valley:  
 Far from its margin at times, and seeing the  
 gleam of its water  
 Here and there, in some open space, and at  
 intervals only;  
 Then drawing nearer its banks, through  
 sylvan glooms that conceal it,  
 Though he behold it not, he can hear its  
 continuous murmur;  
 Happy, at length, if he find the spot where  
 it reaches an outlet.

## II

It was the month of May. Far down the  
 Beautiful River,  
 Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth of  
 the Wabash,  
 Into the golden stream of the broad and  
 swift Mississippi,

Floated a cumbrous boat, that was rowed  
 by Acadian boatmen.  
 It was a band of exiles: a raft, as it were,  
 from the shipwrecked  
 Nation, scattered along the coast, now  
 floating together,  
 Bound by the bonds of a common belief  
 and a common misfortune;  
 Men and women and children, who, guided  
 by hope or by hearsay,  
 Sought for their kith and their kin among  
 the few-acred farmers  
 On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of  
 fair Opelousas.  
 With them Evangeline went, and her guide,  
 the Father Felician.  
 Onward o'er sunken sands, through a wil-  
 derness sombre with forests,  
 Day after day they glided adown the tur-  
 bulent river;  
 Night after night, by their blazing fires,  
 encamped on its borders.  
 Now through rushing chutes, among green  
 islands, where plumelike  
 Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests,  
 they swept with the current,  
 Then emerged into broad lagoons, where  
 silvery sand-bars  
 Lay in the stream, and along the wimpling  
 waves of their margin,  
 Shining with snow-white plumes, large  
 flocks of pelicans waded.  
 Level the landscape grew, and along the  
 shores of the river,  
 Shaded by china-trees, in the midst of lux-  
 uriant gardens,  
 Stood the houses of planters, with negro-  
 cabins and dove-cots.  
 They were approaching the region where  
 reigns perpetual summer,  
 Where through the Golden Coast, and  
 groves of orange and citron,  
 Sweeps with majestic curve the river away  
 to the eastward.  
 They, too, swerved from their course; and  
 entering the Bayou of Plaque-  
 mine,  
 Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and  
 devious waters,  
 Which, like a network of steel, extended in  
 every direction.  
 Over their heads the towering and tene-  
 brous boughs of the cypress  
 Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses in  
 mid-air



Waved like banners that hang on the walls  
 of ancient cathedrals.  
 Deathlike the silence seemed, and un-  
 broken, save by the herons  
 Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees re-  
 turning at sunset,  
 Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with  
 demoniac laughter.  
 Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and  
 gleamed on the water, 110  
 Gleamed on the columns of cypress and  
 cedar sustaining the arches,  
 Down through whose broken vaults it fell  
 as through chinks in a ruin.  
 Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were  
 all things around them;  
 And o'er their spirits there came a feeling  
 of wonder and sadness, —  
 Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that  
 cannot be compassed.  
 As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the  
 turf of the prairies,  
 Far in advance are closed the leaves of the  
 shrinking mimosa,  
 So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad fore-  
 bodings of evil,  
 Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke  
 of doom has attained it.  
 But Evangeline's heart was sustained by a  
 vision, that faintly 120  
 Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her  
 on through the moonlight.  
 It was the thought of her brain that as-  
 sumed the shape of a phantom.  
 Through those shadowy aisles had Gabriel  
 wandered before her,  
 And every stroke of the oar now brought  
 him nearer and nearer.

Then in his place, at the prow of the  
 boat, rose one of the oarsmen,  
 And, as a signal sound, if others like them  
 peradventure  
 Sailed on those gloomy and midnight  
 streams, blew a blast on his bugle.  
 Wild through the dark colonnades and cor-  
 ridors leafy the blast rang,  
 Breaking the seal of silence, and giving  
 tongues to the forest.  
 Soundless above them the banners of moss  
 just stirred to the music. 130  
 Multitudinous echoes awoke and died in  
 the distance,  
 Over the watery floor, and beneath the re-  
 verberant branches;

But not a voice replied; no answer came  
 from the darkness;  
 And, when the echoes had ceased, like a  
 sense of pain was the silence.  
 Then Evangeline slept; but the boatmen  
 rowed through the midnight,  
 Silent at times, then singing familiar Cana-  
 dian boat-songs,  
 Such as they sang of old on their own Aca-  
 dian rivers,  
 While through the night were heard the  
 mysterious sounds of the desert,  
 Far off, — indistinct, — as of wave or wind  
 in the forest,  
 Mixed with the whoop of the crane and  
 the roar of the grim alligator. 140

Thus ere another noon they emerged  
 from the shades; and before them  
 Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the  
 Atchafalaya.  
 Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight  
 undulations  
 Made by the passing oars, and, resplendent  
 in beauty, the lotus  
 Lifted her golden crown above the heads  
 of the boatmen.  
 Faint was the air with the odorous breath  
 of magnolia blossoms,  
 And with the heat of noon; and numberless  
 sylvan islands,  
 Fragrant and thickly embowered with blos-  
 soming hedges of roses,  
 Near to whose shores they glided along,  
 invited to slumber.  
 Soon by the fairest of these their weary  
 oars were suspended. 150  
 Under the boughs of Wachita willows, that  
 grew by the margin,  
 Safely their boat was moored; and scat-  
 tered about on the greensward,  
 Tired with their midnight toil, the weary  
 travellers slumbered.  
 Over them vast and high extended the cope  
 of a cedar.  
 Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-  
 flower and the grapevine  
 Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the  
 ladder of Jacob,  
 On whose pendulous stairs the angels as-  
 cending, descending,  
 Were the swift humming-birds, that flitted  
 from blossom to blossom.  
 Such was the vision Evangeline saw as she  
 slumbered beneath it.

Filled was her heart with love, and the  
dawn of an opening heaven 160  
Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of  
regions celestial.

Nearer, and ever nearer, among the  
numberless islands,  
Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away  
o'er the water,  
Urged on its course by the sinewy arms of  
hunters and trappers.  
Northward its prow was turned, to the land  
of the bison and beaver.  
At the helm sat a youth, with countenance  
thoughtful and careworn.  
Dark and neglected locks overshadowed his  
brow, and a sadness  
Somewhat beyond his years on his face was  
legibly written.  
Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting,  
unhappy and restless,  
Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of  
self and of sorrow. 170  
Swiftly they glided along, close under the  
lee of the island,  
But by the opposite bank, and behind a  
screen of palmettos,  
So that they saw not the boat, where it lay  
concealed in the willows;  
All undisturbed by the dash of their oars,  
and unseen, were the sleepers.  
Angel of God was there none to awaken the  
slumbering maiden.  
Swiftly they glided away, like the shade of  
a cloud on the prairie.  
After the sound of their oars on the tholes  
had died in the distance,  
As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke,  
and the maiden  
Said with a sigh to the friendly priest, 'O  
Father Felician!  
Something says in my heart that near me  
Gabriel wanders. 180  
Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague  
superstition?  
Or has an angel passed, and revealed the  
truth to my spirit?'  
Then, with a blush, she added, 'Alas for  
my credulous fancy!  
Unto ears like thine such words as these  
have no meaning.'  
But made answer the reverend man, and he  
smiled as he answered, —  
'Daughter, thy words are not idle; nor are  
they to me without meaning.

Feeling is deep and still; and the word that  
floats on the surface  
Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where  
the anchor is hidden.  
Therefore trust to thy heart, and to what  
the world calls illusions.  
Gabriel truly is near thee; for not far away  
to the southward, 190  
On the banks of the Têche, are the towns  
of St. Maur and St. Martin.  
There the long-wandering bride shall be  
given again to her bridegroom,  
There the long-absent pastor regain his  
flock and his sheepfold.  
Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and  
forests of fruit-trees;  
Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the  
bluest of heavens  
Bending above, and resting its dome on the  
walls of the forest.  
They who dwell there have named it the  
Eden of Louisiana!'

With these words of cheer they arose and  
continued their journey.  
Softly the evening came. The sun from  
the western horizon  
Like a magician extended his golden wand  
o'er the landscape; 200  
Twinkling vapors arose; and sky and water  
and forest  
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted  
and mingled together.  
Hanging between two skies, a cloud with  
edges of silver,  
Floated the boat, with its dripping oars, on  
the motionless water.  
Filled was Evangeline's heart with inex-  
pressible sweetness.  
Touched by the magic spell, the sacred  
fountains of feeling  
Glowed with the light of love, as the skies  
and waters around her.  
Then from a neighboring thicket the mock-  
ing-bird, wildest of singers,  
Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung  
o'er the water,  
Shook from his little throat such floods of  
delirious music, 210  
That the whole air and the woods and the  
waves seemed silent to listen.  
Plaintive at first were the tones and sad:  
then soaring to madness  
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel  
of frenzied Bacchantes.

Single notes were then heard, in sorrowful,  
 low lamentation;  
 Till, having gathered them all, he flung  
 them abroad in derision,  
 As when, after a storm, a gust of wind  
 through the tree-tops  
 Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal  
 shower on the branches.  
 With such a prelude as this, and hearts  
 that throbbed with emotion,  
 Slowly they entered the Têche, where it  
 flows through the green Opelou-  
 sas,  
 And, through the amber air, above the  
 crest of the woodland,  
 Saw the column of smoke that arose from  
 a neighboring dwelling;—  
 Sounds of a horn they heard, and the dis-  
 tant lowing of cattle.

## III

Near to the bank of the river, o'ershad-  
 owed by oaks, from whose branches  
 Garlands of Spanish moss and of mystic  
 mistletoe flaunted,  
 Such as the Druids cut down with golden  
 hatchets at Yule-tide,  
 Stood, secluded and still, the house of the  
 herdsman. A garden  
 Girded it round about with a belt of luxuri-  
 ant blossoms,  
 Filling the air with fragrance. The house  
 itself was of timbers  
 Hewn from the cypress-tree, and carefully  
 fitted together.  
 Large and low was the roof; and on slender  
 columns supported,  
 Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad and  
 spacious veranda,  
 Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee,  
 . extended around it.  
 At each end of the house, amid the flowers  
 of the garden,  
 Stationed the dove-cots were, as love's per-  
 petual symbol,  
 Scenes of endless wooing, and endless con-  
 tentions of rivals.  
 Silence reigned o'er the place. The line of  
 shadow and sunshine  
 Ran near the tops of the trees; but the  
 house itself was in shadow,  
 And from its chimney-top, ascending and  
 slowly expanding  
 Into the evening air, a thin blue column of  
 smoke rose.

In the rear of the house, from the garden  
 gate, ran a pathway  
 Through the great groves of oak to the  
 skirts of the limitless prairie,  
 Into whose sea of flowers the sun was  
 slowly descending.  
 Full in his track of light, like ships with  
 shadowy canvas  
 Hanging loose from their spars in a motion-  
 less calm in the tropics,  
 Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cord-  
 age of grape-vines.

Just where the woodlands met the flow-  
 ery surf of the prairie,  
 Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish sad-  
 dle and stirrups,  
 Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters and  
 doublet of deerskin.  
 Broad and brown was the face that from  
 under the Spanish sombrero  
 Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the  
 lordly look of its master.  
 Round about him were numberless herds  
 of kine, that were grazing  
 Quietly in the meadows, and breathing the  
 vapory freshness  
 That uprose from the river, and spread  
 itself over the landscape.  
 Slowly lifting the horn that hung at his side,  
 and expanding  
 Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew a blast,  
 that resounded  
 Wildly and sweet and far, through the still  
 damp air of the evening.  
 Suddenly out of the grass the long white  
 horns of the cattle  
 Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse  
 currents of ocean.  
 Silent a moment they gazed, then bellow-  
 ing rushed o'er the prairie,  
 And the whole mass became a cloud, a  
 shade in the distance.  
 Then, as the herdsman turned to the house,  
 through the gate of the garden  
 Saw he the forms of the priest and the  
 maiden advancing to meet him.  
 Suddenly down from his horse he sprang in  
 amazement, and forward  
 Rushed with extended arms and exclama-  
 tions of wonder;  
 When they beheld his face, they recognized  
 Basil the blacksmith.  
 Hearty his welcome was, as he led his  
 guests to the garden.

There in an arbor of roses with endless  
 question and answer  
 Gave they vent to their hearts, and renewed  
 their friendly embraces,  
 Laughing and weeping by turns, or sitting  
 silent and thoughtful.  
 Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not; and now  
 dark doubts and misgivings <sup>270</sup>  
 Stole o'er the maiden's heart; and Basil,  
 somewhat embarrassed,  
 Broke the silence and said, 'If you came  
 by the Atchafalaya,  
 How have you nowhere encountered my  
 Gabriel's boat on the bayous?'  
 Over Evangeline's face at the words of  
 Basil a shade passed.  
 Tears came into her eyes, and she said,  
 with a tremulous accent,  
 'Gone? is Gabriel gone?' and, conceal-  
 ing her face on his shoulder,  
 All her o'erburdened heart gave way, and  
 she wept and lamented.  
 Then the good Basil said, — and his voice  
 grew blithe as he said it, —  
 'Be of good cheer, my child; it is only to-  
 day he departed.  
 Foolish boy! he has left me alone with my  
 herds and my horses. <sup>280</sup>  
 Moody and restless grown, and tried and  
 troubled, his spirit  
 Could no longer endure the calm of this  
 quiet existence,  
 Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and sor-  
 rowful ever,  
 Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and  
 his troubles,  
 He at length had become so tedious to men  
 and to maidens,  
 Tedious even to me, that at length I be-  
 thought me, and sent him  
 Unto the town of Adayes to trade for mules  
 with the Spaniards.  
 Thence he will follow the Indian trails to  
 the Ozark Mountains,  
 Hunting for furs in the forests, on rivers  
 trapping the beaver.  
 Therefore be of good cheer; we will fol-  
 low the fugitive lover; <sup>290</sup>  
 He is not far on his way, and the  
 Fates and the streams are against  
 him.  
 Up and away to-morrow, and through the  
 red dew of the morning  
 We will follow him fast, and bring him  
 back to his prison.'

Then glad voices were heard, and up  
 from the banks of the river,  
 Borne aloft on his comrades' arms, came  
 Michael the fiddler.  
 Long under Basil's roof had he lived like a  
 god on Olympus,  
 Having no other care than dispensing  
 music to mortals.  
 Far renowned was he for his silver locks  
 and his fiddle.  
 'Long live Michael,' they cried, 'our brave  
 Acadian minstrel!'  
 As they bore him aloft in triumphal pro-  
 cession; and straightway <sup>300</sup>  
 Father Felician advanced with Evangeline,  
 greeting the old man  
 Kindly and oft, and recalling the past,  
 while Basil, enraptured,  
 Hailed with hilarious joy his old compan-  
 ions and gossips,  
 Laughing loud and long, and embracing  
 mothers and daughters.  
 Much they marvelled to see the wealth of  
 the ci-devant blacksmith,  
 All his domains and his herds, and his pa-  
 triarchal demeanor;  
 Much they marvelled to hear his tales of  
 the soil and the climate,  
 And of the prairies, whose numberless  
 herds were his who would take them;  
 Each one thought in his heart, that he, too,  
 would go and do likewise.  
 Thus they ascended the steps, and crossing  
 the breezy veranda, <sup>310</sup>  
 Entered the hall of the house, where al-  
 ready the supper of Basil  
 Waited his late return; and they rested  
 and feasted together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden dark-  
 ness descended.  
 All was silent without, and, illuming the  
 landscape with silver,  
 Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad  
 stars; but within doors,  
 Brighter than these, shone the faces of  
 friends in the glimmering lamplight.  
 Then from his station aloft, at the head of  
 the table, the herdsman  
 Poured forth his heart and his wine to-  
 gether in endless profusion.  
 Lighting his pipe, that was filled with sweet  
 Natchitoches tobacco,  
 Thus he spake to his guests, who listened,  
 and smiled as they listened: — <sup>320</sup>

' Welcome once more, my friends, who long  
     have been friendless and homeless,  
 Welcome once more to a home, that is  
     better perchance than the old one !  
 Here no hungry winter congeals our blood  
     like the rivers;  
 Here no stony ground provokes the wrath  
     of the farmer.  
 Smoothly the ploughshare runs through the  
     soil, as a keel through the water.  
 All the year round the orange-groves are  
     in blossom; and grass grows  
 More in a single night than a whole Cana-  
     dian summer.  
 Here, too, numberless herds run wild and  
     unclaimed in the prairies;  
 Here, too, lands may be had for the asking,  
     and forests of timber  
 With a few blows of the axe are hewn and  
     framed into houses. <sup>330</sup>  
 After your houses are built, and your fields  
     are yellow with harvests,  
 No King George of England shall drive  
     you away from your homesteads,  
 Burning your dwellings and barns, and  
     stealing your farms and your cat-  
     tle.'  
 Speaking these words, he blew a wrathful  
     cloud from his nostrils,  
 While his huge, brown hand came thunder-  
     ing down on the table,  
 So that the guests all started; and Father  
     Felician, astounded,  
 Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff  
     half-way to his nostrils.  
 But the brave Basil resumed, and his  
     words were milder and gayer: —  
 ' Only beware of the fever, my friends,  
     beware of the fever !  
 For it is not like that of our cold Acadian  
     climate, <sup>340</sup>  
 Cured by wearing a spider hung round  
     one's neck in a nutshell !'  
 Then there were voices heard at the door,  
     and footsteps approaching  
 Sounded upon the stairs and the floor of  
     the breezy veranda.  
 It was the neighboring Creoles and small  
     Acadian planters,  
 Who had been summoned all to the house  
     of Basil the Herdsman.  
 Merry the meeting was of ancient com-  
     rades and neighbors:  
 Friend clasped friend in his arms; and they  
     who before were as strangers,

Meeting in exile, became straightway as  
     friends to each other,  
 Drawn by the gentle bond of a common  
     country together.  
 But in the neighboring hall a strain of mu-  
     sic, proceeding <sup>350</sup>  
 From the accordant strings of Michael's  
     melodious fiddle,  
 Broke up all further speech. Away, like  
     children delighted,  
 All things forgotten beside, they gave them-  
     selves to the maddening  
 Whirl of the giddy dance, as it swept and  
     swayed to the music,  
 Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the rush  
     of fluttering garments.

Meanwhile, apart, at the head of the  
     hall, the priest and the herdsman  
 Sat, conversing together of past and present  
     and future;  
 While Evangeline stood like one entranced,  
     for within her  
 Olden memories rose, and loud in the midst  
     of the music  
 Heard she the sound of the sea, and an ir-  
     repressible sadness <sup>360</sup>  
 Came o'er her heart, and unseen she stole  
     forth into the garden.  
 Beautiful was the night. Behind the black  
     wall of the forest,  
 Tipping its summit with silver, arose the  
     moon. On the river  
 Fell here and there through the branches a  
     tremulous gleam of the moonlight,  
 Like the sweet thoughts of love on a dark-  
     ened and devious spirit.  
 Nearer and round about her, the manifold  
     flowers of the garden  
 Poured out their souls in odors, that were  
     their prayers and confessions  
 Unto the night, as it went its way, like a  
     silent Carthusian.  
 Fuller of fragrance than they, and as heavy  
     with shadows and night-dews,  
 Hung the heart of the maiden. The calm  
     and the magical moonlight <sup>370</sup>  
 Seemed to inundate her soul with indefin-  
     able longings,  
 As, through the garden-gate, and beneath  
     the shade of the oak-trees,  
 Passed she along the path to the edge of  
     the measureless prairie.  
 Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon it,  
     and fire-flies

Gleamed and floated away in mingled and  
infinite numbers.  
Over her head the stars, the thoughts of  
God in the heavens,  
Shone on the eyes of man, who had ceased  
to marvel and worship,  
Save when a blazing comet was seen on the  
walls of that temple,  
As if a hand had appeared and written  
upon them, 'Upharsin.'  
And the soul of the maiden, between the  
stars and the fire-flies, <sup>380</sup>  
Wandered alone, and she cried, 'O Ga-  
briel! O my beloved!  
Art thou so near unto me, and yet I cannot  
behold thee?  
Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy voice  
does not reach me?  
Ah! how often thy feet have trod this path  
to the prairie!  
Ah! how often thine eyes have looked on  
the woodlands around me!  
Ah! how often beneath this oak, returning  
from labor,  
Thou hast lain down to rest, and to dream  
of me in thy slumbers!  
When shall these eyes behold, these arms  
be folded about thee?'  
Loud and sudden and near the notes of a  
whippoorwill sounded  
Like a flute in the woods; and anon, through  
the neighboring thickets, <sup>390</sup>  
Farther and farther away it floated and  
dropped into silence.  
'Patience!' whispered the oaks from orac-  
ular caverns of darkness:  
And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh re-  
sponded, 'To-morrow!'

Bright rose the sun next day; and all the  
flowers of the garden  
Bathed his shining feet with their tears,  
and anointed his tresses  
With the delicious balm that they bore in  
their vases of crystal.  
'Farewell!' said the priest, as he stood at  
the shadowy threshold;  
'See that you bring us the Prodigal Son  
from his fasting and famine,  
And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept when  
the bridegroom was coming.'  
'Farewell!' answered the maiden, and,  
smiling, with Basil descended <sup>400</sup>  
Down to the river's brink, where the boat-  
men already were waiting.

Thus beginning their journey with morn-  
ing, and sunshine, and gladness,  
Swiftly they followed the flight of him who  
was speeding before them,  
Blown by the blast of fate like a dead leaf  
over the desert.  
Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the day  
that succeeded,  
Found they the trace of his course, in lake  
or forest or river,  
Nor, after many days, had they found him;  
but vague and uncertain  
Rumors alone were their guides through a  
wild and desolate country;  
Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town of  
Adayes,  
Weary and worn, they alighted, and learned  
from the garrulous landlord, <sup>410</sup>  
That on the day before, with horses and  
guides and companions,  
Gabriel left the village, and took the road  
of the prairies.

## IV

Far in the West there lies a desert land,  
where the mountains  
Lift, through perpetual snows, their lofty  
and luminous summits.  
Down from their jagged, deep ravines,  
where the gorge, like a gate-  
way,  
Opens a passage rude to the wheels of the  
emigrant's wagon,  
Westward the Oregon flows and the Walle-  
way and Owyhee.  
Eastward, with devious course, among the  
Wind-river Mountains,  
Through the Sweet-water Valley precipi-  
tate leaps the Nebraska;  
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout  
and the Spanish sierras, <sup>420</sup>  
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept by  
the wind of the desert,  
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound,  
descend to the ocean,  
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud and  
solemn vibrations.  
Spreading between these streams are the  
wondrous, beautiful prairies;  
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow  
and sunshine,  
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and  
purple amorphas.  
Over them wandered the buffalo herds, and  
the elk and the roebuck;



Over them wandered the wolves, and herds  
 of riderless horses;  
 Fires that blast and blight, and winds that  
 are weary with travel;  
 Over them wander the scattered tribes of  
 Ishmael's children, 430  
 Staining the desert with blood; and above  
 their terrible war-trails  
 Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic,  
 the vulture,  
 Like the implacable soul of a chieftain  
 slaughtered in battle,  
 By invisible stairs ascending and scaling  
 the heavens.  
 Here and there rise smokes from the  
 camps of these savage maraud-  
 ers;  
 Here and there rise groves from the mar-  
 gins of swift-running rivers;  
 And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite  
 monk of the desert,  
 Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for  
 roots by the brook-side,  
 And over all is the sky, the clear and crys-  
 talline heaven,  
 Like the protecting hand of God inverted  
 above them. 440

Into this wonderful land, at the base of  
 the Ozark Mountains,  
 Gabriel far had entered, with hunters and  
 trappers behind him.  
 Day after day, with their Indian guides, the  
 maiden and Basil  
 Followed his flying steps, and thought each  
 day to o'ertake him.  
 Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw,  
 the smoke of his camp-fire  
 Rise in the morning air from the distant  
 plain; but at nightfall,  
 When they had reached the place they  
 found only embers and ashes.  
 And, though their hearts were sad at times  
 and their bodies were weary,  
 Hope still guided them on, as the magic  
 Fata Morgana  
 Showed them her lakes of light, that re-  
 treated and vanished before them. 450

Once, as they sat by their evening fire,  
 there silently entered  
 Into their little camp an Indian woman,  
 whose features  
 Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience  
 as great as her sorrow.

She was a Shawnee woman returning home  
 to her people,  
 From the far-off hunting-grounds of the  
 cruel Camanches,  
 Where her Canadian husband, a Coureur-  
 des-Bois, had been murdered.  
 Touched were their hearts at her story,  
 and warmest and friendliest wel-  
 come  
 Gave they, with words of cheer, and she sat  
 and feasted among them  
 On the buffalo-meat and the venison cooked  
 on the embers.  
 But when their meal was done, and Basil  
 and all his companions, 460  
 Worn with the long day's march and the  
 chase of the deer and the bison,  
 Stretched themselves on the ground, and  
 slept where the quivering fire-light  
 Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and their  
 forms wrapped up in their blankets,  
 Then at the door of Evangeline's tent she  
 sat and repeated  
 Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the charm  
 of her Indian accent,  
 All the tale of her love, with its pleasures,  
 and pains, and reverses.  
 Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and to  
 know that another  
 Hapless heart like her own had loved and  
 had been disappointed.  
 Moved to the depths of her soul by pity  
 and woman's compassion,  
 Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who  
 had suffered was near her, 470  
 She in turn related her love and all its dis-  
 asters.  
 Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat, and  
 when she had ended  
 Still was mute; but at length, as if a mys-  
 terious horror  
 Passed through her brain, she spake, and  
 repeated the tale of the Mowis;  
 Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who won  
 and wedded a maiden,  
 But, when the morning came, arose and  
 passed from the wigwam,  
 Fading and melting away and dissolving  
 into the sunshine,  
 Till she beheld him no more, though she  
 followed far into the forest.  
 Then, in those sweet, low tones, that seemed  
 like a weird incantation,  
 Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau, who  
 was wooed by a phantom, 480



That through the pines o'er her father's  
 lodge, in the hush of the twilight,  
 Breathed like the evening wind, and whis-  
 pered love to the maiden,  
 Till she followed his green and waving  
 plume through the forest,  
 And nevermore returned, nor was seen  
 again by her people.  
 Silent with wonder and strange surprise,  
 Evangeline listened  
 To the soft flow of her magical words, till  
 the region around her  
 Seemed like enchanted ground, and her  
 swarthy guest the enchantress.  
 Slowly over the tops of the Ozark Moun-  
 tains the moon rose,  
 Lighting the little tent, and with a myste-  
 rious splendor  
 Touching the sombre leaves, and embracing  
 and filling the woodland. 490  
 With a delicious sound the brook rushed  
 by, and the branches  
 Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely  
 audible whispers.  
 Filled with the thoughts of love was Evan-  
 geline's heart, but a secret,  
 Subtile sense crept in of pain and indefinite  
 terror,  
 As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into the  
 nest of the swallow.  
 It was no earthly fear. A breath from the  
 region of spirits  
 Seemed to float in the air of night; and she  
 felt for a moment  
 That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was  
 pursuing a phantom.  
 With this thought she slept, and the fear  
 and the phantom had vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march was  
 resumed; and the Shawnee 500  
 Said, as they journeyed along, 'On the  
 western slope of these mountains  
 Dwells in his little village the Black Robe  
 chief of the Mission.  
 Much he teaches the people, and tells them  
 of Mary and Jesus.  
 Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and weep  
 with pain, as they hear him.'  
 Then, with a sudden and secret emotion,  
 Evangeline answered,  
 'Let us go to the Mission, for there good  
 tidings await us!'  
 Thither they turned their steeds; and be-  
 hind a spur of the mountains,

Just as the sun went down, they heard a  
 murmur of voices,  
 And in a meadow green and broad, by the  
 bank of a river,  
 Saw the tents of the Christians, the tents  
 of the Jesuit Mission. 510  
 Under a towering oak, that stood in the  
 midst of the village,  
 Knelt the Black Robe chief with his chil-  
 dren. A crucifix fastened  
 High on the trunk of the tree, and over-  
 shadowed by grapevines,  
 Looked with its agonized face on the multi-  
 tude kneeling beneath it.  
 This was their rural chapel. Aloft, through  
 the intricate arches  
 Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of their  
 vespers,  
 Mingling its notes with the soft susurrus  
 and sighs of the branches.  
 Silent, with heads uncovered, the travellers,  
 nearer approaching,  
 Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined in  
 the evening devotions.  
 But when the service was done, and the  
 benediction had fallen 520  
 Forth from the hands of the priest, like  
 seed from the hands of the sower,  
 Slowly the reverend man advanced to the  
 strangers, and bade them  
 Welcome; and when they replied, he smiled  
 with benignant expression,  
 Hearing the homelike sounds of his mother-  
 tongue in the forest,  
 And, with words of kindness, conducted  
 them into his wigwam.  
 There upon mats and skins they reposed,  
 and on cakes of the maize-ear  
 Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the  
 water-gourd of the teacher.  
 Soon was their story told; and the priest  
 with solemnity answered:—  
 'Not six suns have risen and set since  
 Gabriel, seated  
 On this mat by my side, where now the  
 maiden reposes, 530  
 Told me this same sad tale; then arose and  
 continued his journey!'  
 Soft was the voice of the priest, and he  
 spake with an accent of kind-  
 ness;  
 But on Evangeline's heart fell his words as  
 in winter the snow-flakes  
 Fall into some lone nest from which the  
 birds have departed.

'Far to the north he has gone,' continued  
the priest; 'but in autumn,  
When the chase is done, will return again  
to the Mission.'

Then Evangeline said, and her voice was  
meek and submissive,

'Let me remain with thee, for my soul is  
sad and afflicted.'

So seemed it wise and well unto all; and  
betimes on the morrow,

Mounting his Mexican steed, with his In-  
dian guides and companions, 540

Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline  
stayed at the Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded  
each other, —

Days and weeks and months; and the fields  
of maize that were springing

Green from the ground when a stranger  
she came, now waving above  
her,

Lifted their slender shafts, with leaves in-  
terlacing, and forming

Cloisters for mendicant crows and granaries  
pillaged by squirrels.

Then in the golden weather the maize was  
husked, and the maidens

Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that be-  
tokened a lover,

But at the crooked laughed, and called it a  
thief in the corn-field.

Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline  
brought not her lover. 550

'Patience!' the priest would say; 'have  
faith, and thy prayer will be an-  
swered!

Look at this vigorous plant that lifts its  
head from the meadow,

See how its leaves are turned to the north,  
as true as the magnet;

This is the compass-flower, that the finger  
of God has planted

Here in the houseless wild, to direct the  
traveller's journey

Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless waste  
of the desert.

Such in the soul of man is faith. The blos-  
soms of passion,

Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter and  
fuller of fragrance,

But they beguile us, and lead us astray, and  
their odor is deadly.

Only this humble plant can guide us here,  
and hereafter 560

Crown us with asphodel flowers, that are  
wet with the dews of nepenthe.'

So came the autumn, and passed, and the  
winter, — yet Gabriel came not;

Blossomed the opening spring, and the notes  
of the robin and bluebird

Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood, yet  
Gabriel came not.

But on the breath of the summer winds a  
rumor was wafted

Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or odor  
of blossom.

Far to the north and east, it said, in the  
Michigan forests,

Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of the  
Saginaw River.

And, with returning guides, that sought the  
lakes of St. Lawrence,

Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went  
from the Mission. 570

When over weary ways, by long and peril-  
ous marches,

She had attained at length the depths of  
the Michigan forests,

Found she the hunter's lodge deserted and  
fallen to ruin!

Thus did the long sad years glide on.  
and in seasons and places

Divers and distant far was seen the wan-  
dering maiden; —

Now in the Tents of Grace of the meek  
Moravian Missions,

Now in the noisy camps and the battle-fields  
of the army,

Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and  
populous cities.

Like a phantom she came, and passed away  
unremembered.

Fair was she and young, when in hope be-  
gan the long journey; 580

Faded was she and old, when in disappoint-  
ment it ended.

Each succeeding year stole something away  
from her beauty,

Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the  
gloom and the shadow.

Then there appeared and spread faint  
streaks of gray o'er her fore-  
head,

Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her  
earthly horizon,

As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks  
of the morning.

v<sup>1</sup>

In that delightful land which is washed by  
 the Delaware waters,  
 Guarding in sylvan shades the name of  
 Penn the apostle,  
 Stands on the banks of its beautiful stream  
 the city he founded.  
 There all the air is balm, and the peach is  
 the emblem of beauty,  
 And the streets still reëcho the names of  
 the trees of the forest,  
 As if they fain would appease the Dryads  
 whose haunts they molested.  
 There from the troubled sea had Evange-  
 line landed, an exile,  
 Finding among the children of Penn a home  
 and a country.  
 There old René Leblanc had died; and  
 when he departed,  
 Saw at his side only one of all his hundred  
 descendants.  
 Something at least there was in the friendly  
 streets of the city,  
 Something that spake to her heart, and  
 made her no longer a stranger;  
 And her ear was pleased with the Thee and  
 Thou of the Quakers,  
 For it recalled the past, the old Acadian  
 country,  
 Where all men were equal, and all were  
 brothers and sisters.  
 So, when the fruitless search, the disap-  
 pointed endeavor,  
 Ended, to recommence no more upon earth,  
 uncomplaining,  
 Thither, as leaves to the light, were  
 turned her thoughts and her foot-  
 steps.  
 As from the mountain's top the rainy mists  
 of the morning  
 Roll away, and afar we behold the land-  
 scape below us,

<sup>1</sup> I fear that I cannot establish by any historic proof the identity of the old building you speak of in your kind letter, with that in which Evangeline found Gabriel. A great many years ago, strolling through the streets of Philadelphia, I passed an old almshouse within high brick walls, and with trees growing in its enclosure. The quiet and seclusion of the place . . . impressed me deeply. This was long before the poem was written and before I had heard the tradition on which it was founded. But remembering the place, I chose it for the final scene. (LONGFELLOW, in a letter to Miss E. S. Phelps, March 12, 1876; *Life*, vol. iii, pp. 259, 260.)

This visit to Philadelphia was made fifty years before, in 1826, when Longfellow was waiting at New York for the ship which was to take him on his first trip to Europe.

Sun-illuminated, with shining rivers and cities  
 and hamlets,  
 So fell the mists from her mind, and she  
 saw the world far below her,  
 Dark no longer, but all illumined with love;  
 and the pathway  
 Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth  
 and fair in the distance.  
 Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her  
 heart was his image,  
 Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as  
 last she beheld him,  
 Only more beautiful made by his death-like  
 silence and absence.  
 Into her thoughts of him time entered not,  
 for it was not.  
 Over him years had no power; he was not  
 changed, but transfigured;  
 He had become to her heart as one who is  
 dead, and not absent;  
 Patience and abnegation of self, and devo-  
 tion to others,  
 This was the lesson a life of trial and sor-  
 row had taught her.  
 So was her love diffused, but, like to some  
 odorous spices,  
 Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling  
 the air with aroma.  
 Other hope had she none, nor wish in life,  
 but to follow  
 Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred  
 feet of her Saviour.  
 Thus many years she lived as a Sister of  
 Mercy; frequenting  
 Lonely and wretched roofs in the crowded  
 lanes of the city,  
 Where distress and want concealed them-  
 selves from the sunlight,  
 Where disease and sorrow in garrets lan-  
 guished neglected.  
 Night after night, when the world was  
 asleep, as the watchman repeated  
 Loud, through the gusty streets, that all  
 was well in the city,  
 High at some lonely window he saw the  
 light of her taper.  
 Day after day, in the gray of the dawn, as  
 slow through the suburbs  
 Plodded the German farmer, with flowers  
 and fruits for the market,  
 Met he that meek, pale face, returning home  
 from its watchings.

Then it came to pass that a pestilence  
 fell on the city,

Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly by  
flocks of wild pigeons,  
Darkening the sun in their flight, with  
naught in their craws but an acorn.  
And, as the tides of the sea arise in the  
month of September,  
Flooding some silver stream, till it spreads  
to a lake in the meadow,  
So death flooded life, and, o'erflowing its  
natural margin,  
Spread to a brackish lake, the silver stream  
of existence.

Wealth had no power to bribe, nor beauty  
to charm, the oppressor; 640  
But all perished alike beneath the scourge  
of his anger;—

Only, alas! the poor, who had neither  
friends nor attendants,  
Crept away to die in the almshouse, home  
of the homeless.

Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst  
of meadows and woodlands;—

Now the city surrounds it; but still, with  
its gateway and wicket

Meek, in the midst of splendor, its humble  
walls seemed to echo

Softly the words of the Lord: 'The poor  
ye always have with you.'

Thither, by night and by day, came the  
Sister of Mercy. The dying

Looked up into her face, and thought, in-  
deed, to behold there

Gleams of celestial light encircle her fore-  
head with splendor, 650

Such as the artist paints o'er the brows of  
saints and apostles,

Or such as hangs by night o'er a city seen  
at a distance.

Unto their eyes it seemed the lamps of the  
city celestial,

Into whose shining gates erelong their  
spirits would enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through the  
streets, deserted and silent,

Wending her quiet way, she entered the  
door of the almshouse.

Sweet on the summer air was the odor of  
flowers in the garden;

And she paused on her way to gather the  
fairest among them,

That the dying once more might rejoice in  
their fragrance and beauty.

Then, as she mounted the stairs to the cor-  
ridors, cooled by the east-wind, 660

Distant and soft on her ear fell the  
chimes from the belfry of Christ  
Church,

While, intermingled with these, across the  
meadows were wafted

Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the  
Swedes in their church at Wicaco.

Soft as descending wings fell the calm of  
the hour on her spirit:

Something within her said, 'At length thy  
trials are ended;'

And, with light in her looks, she entered  
the chambers of sickness.

Noiselessly moved about the assiduous,  
careful attendants,

Moistening the feverish lip, and the aching  
brow, and in silence

Closing the sightless eyes of the dead, and  
concealing their faces,

Where on their pallets they lay, like drifts  
of snow by the roadside. 670

Many a languid head, upraised as Evange-  
line entered,

Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while  
she passed, for her presence

Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun  
on the walls of a prison.

And, as she looked around, she saw how  
Death, the consoler,

Laying his hand upon many a heart, had  
healed it forever.

Many familiar forms had disappeared in  
the night time;

Vacant their places were, or filled already  
by strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a  
feeling of wonder,

Still she stood, with her colorless lips  
apart, while a shudder

Ran through her frame, and, forgotten,  
the flowerets dropped from her fin-  
gers, 680

And from her eyes and cheeks the light and  
bloom of the morning.

Then there escaped from her lips a cry of  
such terrible anguish,

That the dying heard it, and started up  
from their pillows.

On the pallet before her was stretched the  
form of an old man.

Long, and thin, and gray were the locks  
that shaded his temples;

But, as he lay in the morning light, his  
face for a moment

Seemed to assume once more the forms of  
 its earlier manhood;  
 So are wont to be changed the faces of  
 those who are dying.  
 Hot and red on his lips still burned the  
 flush of the fever,  
 As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had  
 besprinkled its portals, 690  
 That the Angel of Death might see the  
 sign, and pass over.  
 Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and  
 his spirit exhausted  
 Seemed to be sinking down through infinite  
 depths in the darkness,  
 Darkness of slumber and death, forever  
 sinking and sinking.  
 Then through those realms of shade, in  
 multiplied reverberations,  
 Heard he that cry of pain, and through  
 the hush that succeeded  
 Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender  
 and saint-like,  
 'Gabriel! O my beloved!' and died away  
 into silence.  
 Then he beheld, in a dream, once more  
 the home of his childhood;  
 Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers  
 among them, 700  
 Village, and mountain, and woodlands; and,  
 walking under their shadow,  
 As in the days of her youth, Evangeline  
 rose in his vision.  
 Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly he  
 lifted his eyelids,  
 Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline  
 knelt by his bedside.  
 Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for  
 the accents unuttered  
 Died on his lips, and their motion revealed  
 what his tongue would have spoken.  
 Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangeline,  
 kneeling beside him,  
 Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on  
 her bosom.  
 Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it sud-  
 denly sank into darkness,  
 As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of  
 wind at a casement. 710

All was ended now, the hope, and the  
 fear, and the sorrow,

All the aching of heart, the restless, unsat-  
 isfied longing,  
 All the dull, deep pain, and constant an-  
 guish of patience!  
 And, as she pressed once more the lifeless  
 head to her bosom,  
 Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured,  
 'Father, I thank thee!'

Still stands the forest primeval; but far  
 away from its shadow,  
 Side by side, in their nameless graves, the  
 lovers are sleeping.  
 Under the humble walls of the little Catho-  
 lic churchyard,  
 In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown  
 and unnoticed.  
 Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flow-  
 ing beside them, 720  
 Thousands of throbbing hearts, where  
 theirs are at rest and forever,  
 Thousands of aching brains, where theirs  
 no longer are busy,  
 Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs  
 have ceased from their labors,  
 Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have  
 completed their journey!

Still stands the forest primeval; but un-  
 der the shade of its branches  
 Dwells another race, with other customs  
 and language.  
 Only along the shore of the mournful and  
 misty Atlantic  
 Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose fa-  
 thers from exile  
 Wandered back to their native land to die  
 • in its bosom.  
 In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the  
 loom are still busy; 730  
 Maidens still wear their Norman caps and  
 their kirtles of homespun,  
 And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline's  
 story,  
 While from its rocky caverns the deep-  
 voiced, neighboring ocean  
 Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers  
 the wail of the forest.

1845-47.

1847.

## WANDERER'S NIGHT-SONGS

(WANDRERS NACHTLIED AND EIN  
GLEICHES)

FROM GOETHE

## I

THOU that from the heavens art,  
Every pain and sorrow stillest,  
And the doubly wretched heart  
Doubly with refreshment fillest,  
I am weary with contending !  
Why this rapture and unrest ?  
Peace descending  
Come, ah, come into my breast !

## II

O'er all the hill-tops  
Is quiet now,  
In all the tree-tops  
Hearest thou  
Hardly a breath;  
The birds are asleep in the trees:  
Wait; soon like these  
Thou too shalt rest.

1845, 1870.

1870.

## THE BUILDERS

ALL are architects of Fate,  
Working in these walls of Time;  
Some with massive deeds and great,  
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;  
Each thing in its place is best;  
And what seems but idle show  
Strengthens and supports the rest..

For the structure that we raise,  
Time is with materials filled;  
Our to-days and yesterdays  
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these;  
Leave no yawning gaps between;  
Think not, because no man sees,  
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art,  
Builders wrought with greatest care  
Each minute and unseen part;  
For the Gods see everywhere.

20

Let us do our work as well,  
Both the unseen and the seen;  
Make the house, where Gods may dwell,  
Beautiful, entire, and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,  
Standing in these walls of Time,  
Broken stairways, where the feet  
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,  
With a firm and ample base;  
And ascending and secure  
Shall to-morrow find its place.

30

Thus alone can we attain  
To those turrets, where the eye  
Sees the world as one vast plain,  
And one boundless reach of sky.

1846.

1849.

RESIGNATION<sup>1</sup>

THERE is no flock, however watched and  
tended,  
But one dead lamb is there !  
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,  
But has one vacant chair !

The air is full of farewells to the dying,  
And mournings for the dead;  
The heart of Rachel, for her children cry-  
ing,  
Will not be comforted !

Let us be patient ! These severe afflictions  
Not from the ground arise,<sup>2</sup>  
But oftentimes celestial benedictions  
Assume this dark disguise.

10

We see but dimly through the mists and  
vapors;  
Amid these earthly damps  
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers  
May be heaven's distant lamps.

<sup>1</sup> See the *Life of Longfellow*, vol. ii, pp. 129-131, on the death of Fanny Longfellow and her burial, September 11 and 12, 1848; and the entry in Longfellow's *Journal* a month later, November 12: 'An insupportable longing to see her comes over me at times, which I can hardly control.'

See also the letter from Edward Everett, *Life*, vol. ii, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> 'Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.' Job v, 6. (Quoted by LONGFELLOW.)



There is no Death ! What seems so is tran-  
sition;

This life of mortal breath  
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,  
Whose portal we call Death. 20

She is not dead, — the child of our affec-  
tion, —

But gone unto that school  
Where she no longer needs our poor protec-  
tion,  
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclu-  
sion,

By guardian angels led,  
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollu-  
tion,  
She lives whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing  
In those bright realms of air; 30  
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,  
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep un-  
broken

The bond which nature gives,  
Thinking that our remembrance, though  
unspoken,  
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;  
For when with raptures wild  
In our embraces we again enfold her,  
She will not be a child; 40

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,  
Clothed with celestial grace;  
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion  
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emo-  
tion

And anguish long suppressed,  
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the  
ocean,  
That cannot be at rest, —

We will be patient, and assuage the feel-  
ing

We may not wholly stay; 50  
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,  
The grief that must have way.

1848.

1849.

## CHILDREN<sup>1</sup>

COME to me, O ye children !  
For I hear you at your play,  
And the questions that perplexed me  
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,  
That look towards the sun,  
Where thoughts are singing swallows  
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sun-  
shine,  
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow, 10  
But in mine is the wind of Autumn  
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah ! what would the world be to us  
If the children were no more ?  
We should dread the desert behind us  
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,  
With light and air for food,  
Ere their sweet and tender juices  
Have been hardened into wood, — 20

That to the world are children;  
Through them it feels the glow  
Of a brighter and sunnier climate  
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children !  
And whisper in my ear  
What the birds and the winds are singing  
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,  
And the wisdom of our books, 30  
When compared with your caresses,  
And the gladness of your looks ?

Ye are better than all the ballads  
That ever were sung or said;  
For ye are living poems,  
And all the rest are dead.

1849.

(1858.)

## GASPAR BECERRA

BY his evening fire the artist  
Pondered o'er his secret shame;

<sup>1</sup> See note on 'The Children's Hour;' and the *Life of Longfellow*, vol. II, pp. 188, 189, 376, 390-393.



Baffled, weary, and disheartened,  
Still he mused, and dreamed of fame.

'T was an image of the Virgin  
That had tasked his utmost skill;  
But, alas ! his fair ideal  
Vanished and escaped him still.

From a distant Eastern island  
Had the precious wood been brought;  
Day and night the anxious master  
At his toil untiring wrought;

Till, discouraged and desponding,  
Sat he now in shadows deep,  
And the day's humiliation  
Found oblivion in sleep.

Then a voice cried, ' Rise, O master !  
From the burning brand of oak  
Shape the thought that stirs within thee ! ' —  
And the startled artist woke, —

Woke, and from the smoking embers  
Seized and quenched the glowing wood;  
And therefrom he carved an image,  
And he saw that it was good.

O thou sculptor, painter, poet !  
Take this lesson to thy heart:  
That is best which lieth nearest;  
Shape from that thy work of art.

1849.

1849.

## THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

' BUILD me straight, O worthy Master !  
Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,  
That shall laugh at all disaster,  
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle ! '

The merchant's word  
Delighted the Master heard;  
For his heart was in his work, and the heart  
Giveth grace unto every Art.  
A quiet smile played round his lips,  
As the eddies and dimples of the tide 10  
Play round the bows of ships  
That steadily at anchor ride.  
And with a voice that was full of glee,  
He answered, ' Erelong we will launch  
A vessel as goodly, and strong, and stanch,  
As ever weathered a wintry sea ! '  
And first with nicest skill and art,

Perfect and finished in every part,  
A little model the Master wrought,  
Which should be to the larger plan 20  
What the child is to the man,  
Its counterpart in miniature;  
That with a hand more swift and sure  
The greater labor might be brought  
To answer to his inward thought.  
And as he labored, his mind ran o'er  
The various ships that were built of yore,  
And above them all, and strangest of all  
Towered the Great Harry,<sup>1</sup> crank and tall,  
Whose picture was hanging on the wall, 30  
With bows and stern raised high in air,  
And balconies hanging here and there,  
And signal lanterns and flags afloat,  
And eight round towers, like those that  
frown

From some old castle, looking down  
Upon the drawbridge and the moat.  
And he said with a smile, ' Our ship, I wis,  
Shall be of another form than this ! '  
It was of another form, indeed;  
Built for freight, and yet for speed, 40  
A beautiful and gallant craft;  
Broad in the beam, that the stress of the  
blast,

Pressing down upon sail and mast,  
Might not the sharp bows overwhelm;  
Broad in the beam, but sloping aft  
With graceful curve and slow degrees,  
That she might be docile to the helm,  
And that the currents of parted seas,  
Closing behind, with mighty force,  
Might aid and not impede her course. 50

In the ship-yard stood the Master,  
With the model of the vessel,  
That should laugh at all disaster,  
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !

Covering many a rood of ground,  
Lay the timber piled around;  
Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,  
And scattered here and there, with these,  
The knarred and crooked cedar knees;  
Brought from regions far away, 60  
From Pascagoula's sunny bay,  
And the banks of the roaring Roanoke !  
Ah ! what a wondrous thing it is  
To note how many wheels of toil

<sup>1</sup> There was an English warship of this name under Henry VII, and another, which Longfellow here describes, under Henry VIII. See note in the *Riverside Literature Series*.

One thought, one word, can set in motion !  
 There's not a ship that sails the ocean,  
 But every climate, every soil,  
 Must bring its tribute, great or small,  
 And help to build the wooden wall !

The sun was rising o'er the sea,  
 And long the level shadows lay,  
 As if they, too, the beams would be  
 Of some great, airy argosy,  
 Framed and launched in a single day.  
 That silent architect, the sun,  
 Had hewn and laid them every one,  
 Ere the work of man was yet begun.  
 Beside the Master, when he spoke,  
 A youth, against an anchor leaning,  
 Listened, to catch his slightest meaning, 80  
 Only the long waves, as they broke  
 In ripples on the pebbly beach,  
 Interrupted the old man's speech.

Beautiful they were, in sooth,  
 The old man and the fiery youth !  
 The old man, in whose busy brain  
 Many a ship that sailed the main  
 Was modelled o'er and o'er again;  
 The fiery youth, who was to be  
 The heir of his dexterity, 90  
 The heir of his house, and his daughter's  
 hand,  
 When he had built and launched from land  
 What the elder head had planned.

'Thus,' said he, 'will we build this ship !  
 Lay square the blocks upon the slip,  
 And follow well this plan of mine.  
 Choose the timbers with greatest care;  
 Of all that is unsound beware;  
 For only what is sound and strong  
 To this vessel shall belong. 100  
 Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine  
 Here together shall combine.  
 A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,  
 And the UNION be her name !  
 For the day that gives her to the sea  
 Shall give my daughter unto thee !'

The Master's word  
 Enraptured the young man heard;  
 And as he turned his face aside,  
 With a look of joy and a thrill of pride 110  
 Standing before  
 Her father's door,  
 He saw the form of his promised bride.  
 The sun shone on her golden hair,

And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair,  
 With the breath of morn and the soft sea air.  
 Like a beauteous barge was she,  
 Still at rest on the sandy beach,  
 Just beyond the billow's reach;  
 But he 120  
 Was the restless, seething, stormy sea !  
 Ah, how skilful grows the hand  
 That obeyeth Love's command !  
 It is the heart, and not the brain,  
 That to the highest doth attain,  
 And he who followeth Love's behest  
 Far excelleth all the rest !

Thus with the rising of the sun  
 Was the noble task begun,  
 And soon throughout the ship-yard's  
 bounds 130  
 Were heard the intermingled sounds  
 Of axes and of mallets, plied  
 With vigorous arms on every side;  
 Plied so deftly and so well,  
 That, ere the shadows of evening fell,  
 The keel of oak for a noble ship,  
 Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,  
 Was lying ready, and stretched along  
 The blocks, well placed upon the slip.  
 Happy, thrice happy, every one 140  
 Who sees his labor well begun,  
 And not perplexed and multiplied,  
 By idly waiting for time and tide !

And when the hot, long day was o'er,  
 The young man at the Master's door  
 Sat with the maiden calm and still,  
 And within the porch, a little more  
 Removed beyond the evening chill,  
 The father sat, and told them tales  
 Of wrecks in the great September gales, 150  
 Of pirates coasting the Spanish Main,  
 And ships that never came back again,  
 The chance and change of a sailor's life,  
 Want and plenty, rest and strife,  
 His roving fancy, like the wind,  
 That nothing can stay and nothing can  
 bind,

And the magic charm of foreign lands,  
 With shadows of palms, and shining sands,  
 Where the tumbling surf,  
 O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar, 160  
 Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar,  
 As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.  
 And the trembling maiden held her breath  
 At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,  
 With all its terror and mystery,

The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death,  
That divides and yet unites mankind !  
And whenever the old man paused, a gleam  
From the bowl of his pipe would awhile  
illumine

The silent group in the twilight gloom, 170  
And thoughtful faces, as in a dream;  
And for a moment one might mark  
What had been hidden by the dark,  
That the head of the maiden lay at rest,  
Tenderly, on the young man's breast !

Day by day the vessel grew,  
With timbers fashioned strong and true,  
Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,  
Till, framed with perfect symmetry,  
A skeleton ship rose up to view ! 180

And around the bows and along the side  
The heavy hammers and mallets plied,  
Till after many a week, at length,  
Wonderful for form and strength,  
Sublime in its enormous bulk,  
Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk !  
And around it columns of smoke, upwreath-

ing,  
Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething  
Caldron, that glowed,  
And overflowed 190  
With the black tar, heated for the sheath-

ing.  
And amid the clamors  
Of clattering hammers,  
He who listened heard now and then  
The song of the Master and his men: —

'Build me straight, O worthy Master,  
Stanch and strong, a goodly vessel,  
That shall laugh at all disaster,  
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !'

With oaken brace and copper band, 200  
Lay the rudder on the sand,  
That, like a thought, should have control  
Over the movement of the whole;  
And near it the anchor, whose giant hand  
Would reach down and grapple with the  
land,

And immovable and fast  
Hold the great ship against the bellowing  
blast !

And at the bows an image stood,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare the story by Hawthorne, 'Drowne's Wooden Image,' in *Mosses from an old Manse*; and the entry in Longfellow's *Journal*, March 14, 1856. (*Life*, vol. II, p. 307.)

By a cunning artist carved in wood,  
With robes of white, that far behind 210  
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.

It was not shaped in a classic mould,  
Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,  
Or Naiad rising from the water,  
But modelled from the Master's daughter !  
On many a dreary and misty night,  
'T will be seen by the rays of the signal  
light,

Speeding along through the rain and the  
dark,

Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,  
The pilot of some phantom bark, 220  
Guiding the vessel, in its flight,  
By a path none other knows aright !

Behold, at last,  
Each tall and tapering mast  
Is swung into its place;  
Shrouds and stays  
Holding it firm and fast !<sup>2</sup>

Long ago,  
In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,  
When upon mountain and plain 230  
Lay the snow,

They fell, — those lordly pines !  
Those grand, majestic pines !  
'Mid shouts and cheers

The jaded steers,  
Panting beneath the goad,  
Dragged down the weary, winding road  
Those captive kings so straight and tall,  
To be shorn of their streaming hair,  
And naked and bare, 240  
To feel the stress and the strain  
Of the wind and the reeling main,  
Whose roar

Would remind them forevermore  
Of their native forests they should not see  
again.

<sup>2</sup> I wish to anticipate a criticism on this passage, by stating that sometimes, though not usually, vessels are launched fully sparred and rigged. I have availed myself of the exception as better suited to my purposes than the general rule; but the reader will see that it is neither a blunder nor a poetic license. On this subject a friend in Portland, Maine, writes me thus: 'In this State, and also, I am told, in New York, ships are sometimes rigged upon the stocks, in order to save time, or to make a show. There was a fine large ship launched last summer at Ellsworth, fully sparred and rigged. Some years ago a ship was launched here, with her rigging, spars, sails, and cargo aboard. She sailed the next day and — was never heard of again! I hope this will not be the fate of your poem!' (LONGFELLOW.)

And everywhere  
 The slender, graceful spars  
 Poise aloft in the air,  
 And at the mast-head,  
 White, blue, and red, 250  
 A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.  
 Ah ! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,  
 In foreign harbors shall behold  
 That flag unrolled,  
 'T will be as a friendly hand  
 Stretched out from his native land,  
 Filling his heart with memories sweet and  
 endless !

All is finished ! and at length  
 Has come the bridal day  
 Of beauty and of strength. 260  
 To-day the vessel shall be launched !  
 With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,  
 And o'er the bay,  
 Slowly, in all his splendors dight,  
 The great sun rises to behold the sight.  
 The ocean old,  
 Centuries old,  
 Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,  
 Paces restless to and fro,  
 Up and down the sands of gold. 270  
 His beating heart is not at rest;  
 And far and wide,  
 With ceaseless flow,  
 His beard of snow  
 Heaves with the heaving of his breast.  
 He waits impatient for his bride.  
 There she stands,  
 With her foot upon the sands,  
 Decked with flags and streamers gay,  
 In honor of her marriage day, 280  
 Her snow-white signals fluttering, blend-  
 ing,  
 Round her like a veil descending,  
 Ready to be  
 The bride of the gray old sea.

On the deck another bride  
 Is standing by her lover's side.  
 Shadows from the flags and shrouds,  
 Like the shadows cast by clouds,  
 Broken by many a sudden fleck,  
 Fall around them on the deck. 290

The prayer is said,  
 The service read,  
 The joyous bridegroom bows his head;  
 And in tears the good old Master  
 Shakes the brown hand of his son,

Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek  
 In silence, for he cannot speak,  
 And ever faster  
 Down his own the tears begin to run.  
 The worthy pastor — 300  
 The shepherd of that wandering flock,  
 That has the ocean for its wold,  
 That has the vessel for its fold,  
 Leaping ever from rock to rock —  
 Spake, with accents mild and clear,  
 Words of warning, words of cheer,  
 But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.  
 He knew the chart  
 Of the sailor's heart,  
 All its pleasures and its griefs, 310  
 All its shallows and rocky reefs,  
 All those secret currents, that flow  
 With such resistless undertow,  
 And lift and drift, with terrible force,  
 The will from its moorings and its course.  
 Therefore he spake, and thus said he: —  
 ' Like unto ships far off at sea,  
 Outward or homeward bound, are we.  
 Before, behind, and all around,  
 Floats and swings the horizon's bound, 320  
 Seems at its distant rim to rise  
 And climb the crystal wall of the skies,  
 And then again to turn and sink,  
 As if we could slide from its outer brink.  
 Ah ! it is not the sea,  
 It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,  
 But ourselves  
 That rock and rise  
 With endless and uneasy motion,  
 Now touching the very skies, 330  
 Now sinking into the depths of ocean.  
 Ah ! if our souls but poise and swing  
 Like the compass in its brazen ring,  
 Ever level and ever true  
 To the toil and the task we have to do,  
 We shall sail securely, and safely reach  
 The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach  
 The sights we see, and the sounds we  
 hear,  
 Will be those of joy and not of fear !'

Then the Master, 340  
 With a gesture of command,  
 Waved his hand;  
 And at the word,  
 Loud and sudden there was heard,  
 All around them and below,  
 The sound of hammers, blow on blow,  
 Knocking away the shores and spurs.  
 And see ! she stirs !

She starts,—she moves,—she seems to  
feel

The thrill of life along her keel, 350  
And, spurning with her foot the ground,  
With one exulting, joyous bound,  
She leaps into the ocean's arms!

And lo! from the assembled crowd  
There rose a shout, prolonged and loud,  
That to the ocean seemed to say,  
'Take her, O bridegroom, old and gray,  
Take her to thy protecting arms,  
With all her youth and all her charms!

How beautiful she is! How fair 360  
She lies within those arms, that press  
Her form with many a soft caress  
Of tenderness and watchful care!  
Sail forth into the sea, O ship!  
Through wind and wave, right onward  
steer!

The moistened eye, the trembling lip,  
Are not the signs of doubt or fear.

Sail forth into the sea of life,  
O gentle, loving, trusting wife,  
And safe from all adversity 370  
Upon the bosom of that sea  
Thy comings and thy goings be!  
For gentleness and love and trust  
Prevail o'er angry wave and gust;  
And in the wreck of noble lives  
Something immortal still survives!

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!  
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great!  
Humanity with all its fears, 380  
With all the hopes of future years,  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!  
We know what Master laid thy keel,  
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,  
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,  
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,  
In what a forge and what a heat  
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!  
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,  
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;  
'Tis but the flapping of the sail, 390  
And not a rent made by the gale!  
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,  
In spite of false lights on the shore,  
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!  
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,  
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our  
tears,

Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!<sup>1</sup>  
1849. 1849.<sup>2</sup>

### THE LADDER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

SAINT AUGUSTINE! well hast thou said,<sup>3</sup>  
That of our vices we can frame  
A ladder, if we will but tread  
Beneath our feet each deed of shame!

All common things, each day's events,  
That with the hour begin and end,  
Our pleasures and our discontents,  
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design,  
That makes another's virtues less; 10  
The revel of the ruddy wine,  
And all occasions of excess;

The longing for ignoble things;  
The strife for triumph more than truth;  
The hardening of the heart, that brings  
Irreverence for the dreams of youth;

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds,  
That have their root in thoughts of  
ill;

Whatever hinders or impedes  
The action of the nobler will; — 20

<sup>1</sup> These lines, written twelve years before the beginning of the Civil War (and substituted for a weaker ending with which Longfellow was dissatisfied — see the *Life*, vol. iii, pp. 363, 443-4), seemed word by word to fit the circumstances and feelings of the nation in that great struggle, and during its progress roused thousands of audiences to passionate enthusiasm. Lincoln's feeling for them typifies that of the whole people. Mr. Noah Brooks in his paper on *Lincoln's Imagination* (*Scribner's Monthly*, August, 1879), mentions that he found the President one day attracted by these stanzas, quoted in a political speech. 'Knowing the whole poem,' he adds, 'as one of my early exercises in recitation, I began, at his request, with the description of the launch of the ship, and repeated it to the end. As he listened to the last lines, his eyes filled with tears, and his cheeks were wet. He did not speak for some minutes, but finally said, with simplicity: "It is a wonderful gift to be able to stir men like that."' (Quoted in the *Cambridge Edition* of Longfellow.) The first public reading of the poem, by Fanny Kemble, is described in Longfellow's *Journal*, February 12, 1850. *Life*, vol. ii, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> *The Seaside and the Fireside*, in which 'The Building of the Ship' holds the first place, is dated 1850; but the book was actually published late in 1849.

<sup>3</sup> The words of St. Augustine are, 'De vitis nostris scalam nobis facimus, et vitia ipsa calcamus.' — Sermon III. *De Ascensione*. (Longfellow.)

All these must first be trampled down  
 Beneath our feet, if we would gain  
 In the bright fields of fair renown  
 The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar;  
 But we have feet to scale and climb  
 By slow degrees, by more and more,  
 The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone  
 That wedge-like cleave the desert airs, 30  
 When nearer seen, and better known,  
 Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear  
 Their solid bastions to the skies,  
 Are crossed by pathways, that appear  
 As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and  
 kept  
 Were not attained by sudden flight,  
 But they, while their companions slept,  
 Were toiling upward in the night. 40

Standing on what too long we bore  
 With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,  
 We may discern — unseen before —  
 A path to higher destinies,

Nor deem the irrevocable Past  
 As wholly wasted, wholly vain,  
 If, rising on its wrecks, at last  
 To something nobler we attain.<sup>1</sup>

1850. (1858.)

### DAYLIGHT AND MOONLIGHT

In broad daylight, and at noon,  
 Yesterday I saw the moon  
 Sailing high, but faint and white,  
 As a schoolboy's paper kite.

In broad daylight, yesterday,  
 I read a Poet's mystic lay;  
 And it seemed to me at most  
 As a phantom, or a ghost.

But at length the feverish day  
 Like a passion died away,

<sup>1</sup> Compare Tennyson ('In Memoriam'): —  
 'Men may rise on stepping-stones  
 Of their dead selves to higher things.'

And the night, serene and still,  
 Fell on village, vale, and hill.

Then the moon, in all her pride,  
 Like a spirit glorified,  
 Filled and overflowed the night  
 With revelations of her light.

And the Poet's song again  
 Passed like music through my brain;  
 Night interpreted to me  
 All its grace and mystery.

1852.

(1858.)

### THE WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS<sup>2</sup>

A MIST was driving down the British Chan-  
 nel,  
 The day was just begun,  
 And through the window-panes, on floor  
 and panel,  
 Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling  
 pennon,  
 And the white sails of ships;  
 And, from the frowning rampart, the black  
 cannon  
 Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hithe,  
 and Dover  
 Were all alert that day, 10  
 To see the French war-steamers speeding  
 over,  
 When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant  
 lions,  
 Their cannon, through the night,  
 Holding their breath, had watched, in grim  
 defiance,  
 The sea-coast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from  
 their stations  
 On every citadel;  
 Each answering each, with morning saluta-  
 tions,  
 That all was well. 20

<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Wellington, who died September 12,  
 1852.



And down the coast, all taking up the  
burden,  
Replied the distant forts,  
As if to summon from his sleep the Warden  
And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of  
azure,  
No drum-beat from the wall,  
No morning gun from the black fort's em-  
brasure,  
Awaken with its call!

No more, surveying with an eye impartial  
The long line of the coast,  
Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field<sup>30</sup>  
Marshal  
Be seen upon his post!

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,  
In sombre harness mailed,  
Dreaded of man, and surnamed the De-  
stroyer,  
The rampart wall had scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,  
The dark and silent room,  
And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,  
The silence and the gloom.<sup>40</sup>

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,  
But smote the Warden hoar;  
Ah! what a blow! that made all England  
tremble  
And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon  
waited,  
The sun rose bright o'erhead;  
Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated  
That a great man was dead.

1852.

(1858.)

THE TWO ANGELS<sup>1</sup>

Two angels, one of Life and one of Death,  
Passed o'er our village as the morning  
broke;

<sup>1</sup> In a letter of April 25, 1855, Longfellow speaks of this poem as 'written on the birth of my younger daughter, and the death of the young and beautiful wife of my neighbor and friend, the poet Lowell. It will serve as an answer to one of your questions about life and its many mysteries. To these dark problems there is no other solution possible, except the one word *Providence*.' (*Life*, vol. II, p. 285.)

The dawn was on their faces, and be-  
neath,  
The sombre houses hearsed with plumes  
of smoke.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,  
Alike their features and their robes of  
white;  
But one was crowned with amaranth, as  
with flame,  
And one with asphodels, like flakes of  
light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way;  
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt  
oppressed,  
'Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou be-<sup>10</sup>  
tray  
The place where thy beloved are at  
rest!'

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,  
Descending, at my door began to knock,  
And my soul sank within me, as in wells  
The waters sink before an earthquake's  
shock.

I recognized the nameless agony,  
The terror and the tremor and the  
pain,  
That oft before had filled or haunted  
me,  
And now returned with threefold strength  
again.<sup>20</sup>

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,  
And listened, for I thought I heard God's  
voice;  
And, knowing whatsoe'er He sent was  
best,  
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then with a smile, that filled the house  
with light,  
'My errand is not Death, but Life,' he  
said;  
And ere I answered, passing out of sight,  
On his celestial embassy he sped.

'T was at thy door, O friend! and not at  
mine,<sup>29</sup>  
The angel with the amaranthine wreath,  
Pausing, descended, and with voice divine  
Whispered a word that had a sound like  
Death.



Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,  
 A shadow on those features fair and  
 thin;  
 And softly, from that hushed and darkened  
 room,  
 Two angels issued, where but one went  
 in.

All is of God! If He but wave his hand,  
 The mists collect, the rain falls thick and  
 loud,

Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,  
 Lo! He looks back from the departing  
 cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are his;  
 Without his leave they pass no threshold  
 o'er;  
 Who, then, would wish or dare, believing  
 this,  
 Against his messengers to shut the door?  
 1853. (1858.)

## THE SONG OF HIAWATHA<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION<sup>2</sup>

SHOULD you ask me, whence these stories?  
 Whence these legends and traditions,  
 With the odors of the forest,  
 With the dew and damp of meadows,  
 With the curling smoke of wigwams,

<sup>1</sup> Those to whom 'Hiawatha' is familiar from their childhood, but who feel it to be hardly fit food for mature intellects, and those who are wearied by its repetitions, its simplicity, and the monotony of its rhythm, should reread at least the Introduction, and Cantos iii (Hiawatha's Childhood), vii (His Sailing), x (His Wooing), xx (The Famine), and xxii (Hiawatha's Departure). The whole poem, however, without omissions, is necessary to any real knowledge of Longfellow's work or of American poetry. The simplicity of his own character enabled him to reproduce the effects of primitive poetry and legend better than other modern poets have done, and to create what is at least our nearest approach to an American epic. It is greatly superior to all other attempts at epic treatment of the Indian legends. Bayard Taylor said of it: 'It will be parodied, perhaps ridiculed, in many quarters, but it will live after the Indian race has vanished from our Continent, and there will be no parodies then.' Emerson called it 'sweet and wholesome as maize.'

Longfellow wrote 'Hiawatha' with more enthusiasm than any other of his poems. Cf. the *Journal*, October 19, 1854: "'Hiawatha' occupies and delights me. Have I no misgivings about it? Yes, sometimes. Then the theme seizes me and hurries me away, and they vanish.' (*Life*, vol. ii, p. 277.) 'The hero,' he wrote to Freiligrath (who afterward translated "Hiawatha" into German), 'is a kind of American Prometheus.' From the first he felt sure of his subject and his metre: 'I have at length hit upon a plan for a poem on the American Indians, which seems to me the right one, and the only. It is to weave together their beautiful traditions into a whole. I have hit upon a measure, too, which I think the right and only one for such a theme.' (*Journal*, June 22, 1854.)

The metre was avowedly taken from that of the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, which he had read with Freiligrath twelve years before. See Freiligrath's letter in the *London Athenæum*, December 22, 1855.

On the sources from which Longfellow drew his material, see his own notes given below.

Further, on 'Hiawatha,' see:—

*Life*, vol. ii, pp. 272-311.

Longfellow (Alice M.), *A Visit to Hiawatha's People*.  
 Schoolcraft (Henry R.), *The Myth of Hiawatha and*

With the rushing of great rivers,  
 With their frequent repetitions,  
 And their wild reverberations,  
 As of thunder in the mountains?  
 I should answer, I should tell you,  
 'From the forests and the prairies,  
 From the great lakes of the Northland,  
 From the land of the Ojibways,  
 From the land of the Dacotahs,  
 From the mountains, moors, and fenlands  
 Where the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
 Feeds among the reeds and rushes.

*other Oral Legends, Mythologic and Allegoric, of the North American Indians.*

Broili (Otto), *Die Hauptquellen Longfellow's Song of Hiawatha*. Wurzburg, 1898.

Lang (Andrew), *Letters on Literature*.

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Charles (Philarète), in the *Journal des Débats*, April 20, 1856.

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<sup>2</sup> This Indian Edda — if I may so call it — is founded on a tradition, prevalent among the North American Indians, of a personage of miraculous birth, who was sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing-grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace. He was known among different tribes by the several names of Michabou, Chlabo, Manaboso, Tarenia-wagon and Hiawatha. Mr. Schoolcraft gives an account of him in his *Algonic Researches*, vol. i, p. 134, and in his *History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, part iii, p. 314, may be found the Iroquois form of the tradition, derived from the verbal narrations of an Onondaga chief.

Into this old tradition I have woven other curious Indian legends, drawn chiefly from the various and valuable writings of Mr. Schoolcraft, to whom the literary world is greatly indebted for his indefatigable zeal in rescuing from oblivion so much of the legendary lore of the Indians.

The scene of the poem is among the Ojibways on the southern shore of Lake Superior, in the region between the Pictured Rocks and the Grand Sable. (LONGFELLOW.)

I repeat them as I heard them  
From the lips of Nawadaha,  
The musician, the sweet singer.' 20

Should you ask where Nawadaha  
Found these songs so wild and wayward,  
Found these legends and traditions,  
I should answer, I should tell you,  
'In the bird's-nests of the forest,  
In the lodges of the beaver,  
In the hoof-prints of the bison,  
In the eyry of the eagle !

'All the wild-fowl sang them to him,  
In the moorlands and the fen-lands, 30  
In the melancholy marshes;  
Chetowaik, the plover, sang them,  
Mahng, the loon, the wild-goose, Wawa,  
The blue heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
And the grouse, the Mushkodasa !'

If still further you should ask me,  
Saying, 'Who was Nawadaha ?  
Tell us of this Nawadaha,'  
I should answer your inquiries  
Straightway in such words as follow. 40

'In the vale of Tawasentha,<sup>1</sup>  
In the green and silent valley,  
By the pleasant water-courses,  
Dwelt the singer Nawadaha.  
Round about the Indian village  
Spread the meadows and the corn-fields,  
And beyond them stood the forest,  
Stood the groves of singing pine-trees,  
Green in Summer, white in Winter,  
Ever sighing, ever singing. 50

'And the pleasant water-courses,  
You could trace them through the valley,  
By the rushing in the Spring-time,  
By the alders in the Summer,  
By the white fog in the Autumn,  
By the black line in the Winter;  
And beside them dwelt the singer,  
In the vale of Tawasentha,  
In the green and silent valley.

'There he sang of Hiawatha, 60  
Sang the Song of Hiawatha,  
Sang his wondrous birth and being,  
How he prayed and how he fasted,  
How he lived, and toiled, and suffered,  
That the tribes of men might prosper,  
That he might advance his people !'

Ye who love the haunts of Nature,  
Love the sunshine of the meadow,  
Love the shadow of the forest,  
Love the wind among the branches, 70

And the rain-shower and the snow-storm,  
And the rushing of great rivers  
Through their palisades of pine-trees,  
And the thunder in the mountains,  
Whose innumerable echoes  
Flap like eagles in their eyries; —  
Listen to these wild traditions,  
To this Song of Hiawatha !

Ye who love a nation's legends,  
Love the ballads of a people, 80  
That like voices from afar off  
Call to us to pause and listen,  
Speak in tones so plain and childlike,  
Scarcely can the ear distinguish  
Whether they are sung or spoken; —  
Listen to this Indian Legend,  
To this Song of Hiawatha !

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,  
Who have faith in God and Nature,  
Who believe that in all ages 90  
Every human heart is human,  
That in even savage bosoms  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings  
For the good they comprehend not,  
That the feeble hands and helpless,  
Groping blindly in the darkness,  
Touch God's right hand in that darkness  
And are lifted up and strengthened; —  
Listen to this simple story,  
To this Song of Hiawatha ! 100

Ye, who sometimes, in your rambles  
Through the green lanes of the country,  
Where the tangled barberry-bushes  
Hang their tufts of crimson berries  
Over stone walls gray with mosses,  
Pause by some neglected graveyard,  
For a while to muse, and ponder  
On a half-effaced inscription,  
Written with little skill of song-craft,  
Homely phrases, but each letter 110  
Full of hope and yet of heart-break,  
Full of all the tender pathos  
Of the Here and the Hereafter; —  
Stay and read this rude inscription,  
Read this Song of Hiawatha !

## I

THE PEACE-PIPE <sup>2</sup>

On the Mountains of the Prairie,  
On the great Red Pipe-stone Quarry,

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Catlin, in his *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, vol. ii, p. 160, gives an interesting account of the

<sup>1</sup> This valley, now called Norman's Kill, is in Albany County, New York. (LONGFELLOW.)

Gitche Manito, the mighty,  
He the Master of Life, descending,  
On the red crags of the quarry  
Stood erect, and called the nations,  
Called the tribes of men together.

From his footprints flowed a river,  
Leaped into the light of morning,  
O'er the precipice plunging downward 10  
Gleamed like Ishkoodah, the comet.  
And the Spirit, stooping earthward,  
With his finger on the meadow  
Traced a winding pathway for it,  
Saying to it, 'Run in this way!'

From the red stone of the quarry  
With his hand he broke a fragment,  
Moulded it into a pipe-head,  
Shaped and fashioned it with figures;  
From the margin of the river 20  
Took a long reed for a pipe-stem,  
With its dark green leaves upon it;  
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,  
With the bark of the red willow;  
Breathed upon the neighboring forest,  
Made its great boughs chafe together,  
Till in flame they burst and kindled;  
And erect upon the mountains,  
Gitche Manito, the mighty,  
Smoked the calumet, the Peace-Pipe, 30  
As a signal to the nations.

And the smoke rose slowly, slowly,  
Through the tranquil air of morning,  
First a single line of darkness,  
Then a denser, bluer vapor,

*Côteau des Prairies, and the Red Pipestone Quarry.*  
He says:—

'Here (according to their traditions) happened the mysterious birth of the red pipe, which has blown its fumes of peace and war to the remotest corners of the continent; which has visited every warrior, and passed through its reddened stem the irrevocable oath of war and desolation. And here, also, the peace-breathing calumet was born, and fringed with the eagle's quills, which has shed its thrilling fumes over the land, and soothed the fury of the relentless savage.

'The Great Spirit at an ancient period here called the Indian nations together, and, standing on the precipice of the red pipe-stone rock, broke from its wall a piece, and made a huge pipe by turning it in his hand, which he smoked over them, and to the North, the South, the East, and the West, and told them that this stone was red, — that it was their flesh, — that they must use it for their pipes of peace, — that it belonged to them all, and that the war-club and scalping-knife must not be raised on its ground. At the last whiff of his pipe his head went into a great cloud, and the whole surface of the rock for several miles was melted and glazed; two great ovens were opened beneath, and two women (guardian spirits of the place) entered them in a blaze of fire; and they are heard there yet (Tao-mec-coe-tee and Tao-mec-coe-te-won-dee), answering to the invocations of the high-priests or medicine-men, who consult them when they are visitors to this sacred place.' (Lowmellow.)

Then a snow-white cloud unfolding,  
Like the tree-tops of the forest,  
Ever rising, rising, rising,  
Till it touched the top of heaven,  
Till it broke against the heaven, 40  
And rolled outward all around it.

From the Vale of Tawasentha,  
From the Valley of Wyoming,  
From the groves of Tuscaloosa,  
From the far-off Rocky Mountains,  
From the Northern lakes and rivers  
All the tribes beheld the signal,  
Saw the distant smoke ascending,  
The Pukwana of the Peace-Pipe.

And the Prophets of the nations 50  
Said: 'Behold it, the Pukwana!  
By this signal from afar off,  
Bending like a wand of willow,  
Waving like a hand that beckons,  
Gitche Manito, the mighty,  
Calls the tribes of men together,  
Calls the warriors to his council!'

Down the rivers, o'er the prairies,  
Came the warriors of the nations,  
Came the Delawares and Mohawks, 60  
Came the Choctaws and Camanches,  
Came the Shoshonies and Blackfeet,  
Came the Pawnees and Omahas,  
Came the Mandans and Dacotahs,  
Came the Hurons and Ojibways,  
All the warriors drawn together  
By the signal of the Peace-Pipe,  
To the Mountains of the Prairie,  
To the great Red Pipe-stone Quarry.

And they stood there on the meadow, 70  
With their weapons and their war-gear,  
Painted like the leaves of Autumn,  
Painted like the sky of morning,  
Wildly glaring at each other;  
In their faces stern defiance,  
In their hearts the feuds of ages,  
The hereditary hatred,  
The ancestral thirst of vengeance.

Gitche Manito, the mighty,  
The creator of the nations, 80  
Looked upon them with compassion,  
With paternal love and pity;  
Looked upon their wrath and wrangling  
But as quarrels among children,  
But as feuds and fights of children!

Over them he stretched his right hand,  
To subdue their stubborn natures,  
To allay their thirst and fever,  
By the shadow of his right hand;  
Spoke to them with voice majestic 90

As the sound of far-off waters,  
Falling into deep abysses,  
Warning, chiding, spake in this wise:—

‘O my children! my poor children!  
Listen to the words of wisdom,  
Listen to the words of warning,  
From the lips of the Great Spirit,  
From the Master of Life, who made you!

‘I have given you lands to hunt in,  
I have given you streams to fish in, 100  
I have given you bear and bison,  
I have given you roe and reindeer,  
I have given you brant and beaver,  
Filled the marshes full of wild-fowl,  
Filled the rivers full of fishes;

Why then are you not contented?  
Why then will you hunt each other?

‘I am weary of your quarrels,  
Weary of your wars and bloodshed,  
Weary of your prayers for vengeance, 110  
Of your wranglings and dissensions;  
All your strength is in your union,  
All your danger is in discord;  
Therefore be at peace henceforward,  
And as brothers live together.

‘I will send a Prophet to you,  
A Deliverer of the nations,  
Who shall guide you and shall teach you,  
Who shall toil and suffer with you.  
If you listen to his counsels, 120  
You will multiply and prosper;  
If his warnings pass unheeded,  
You will fade away and perish!

‘Bathe now in the stream before you,  
Wash the war-paint from your faces,  
Wash the blood-stains from your fingers,  
Bury your war-clubs and your weapons,  
Break the red stone from this quarry,  
Mould and make it into Peace-Pipes,  
Take the reeds that grow beside you, 130  
Deck them with your brightest feathers,  
Smoke the calumet together,  
And as brothers live henceforward!’

Then upon the ground the warriors  
Threw their cloaks and shirts of deer-skin,  
Threw their weapons and their war-gear,  
Leaped into the rushing river,  
Washed the war-paint from their faces.  
Clear above them flowed the water,  
Clear and limpid from the footprints 140  
Of the Master of Life descending;  
Dark below them flowed the water,  
Soiled and stained with streaks of crimson,  
As if blood were mingled with it!

From the river came the warriors,

Clean and washed from all their war-paint;  
On the banks their clubs they buried,  
Buried all their warlike weapons.

Gitche Manito, the mighty,  
The Great Spirit, the creator, 150  
Smiled upon his helpless children!

And in silence all the warriors  
Broke the red stone of the quarry,  
Smoothed and formed it into Peace-Pipes,  
Broke the long reeds by the river,  
Decked them with their brightest feathers,  
And departed each one homeward,  
While the Master of Life, ascending,  
Through the opening of cloud-curtains,  
Through the doorways of the heaven, 160  
Vanished from before their faces,  
In the smoke that rolled around him,  
The Pukwana of the Peace-Pipe!

## II

## THE FOUR WINDS

‘HONOR be to Mudjekeewis!’  
Cried the warriors, cried the old men,  
When he came in triumph homeward  
With the sacred Belt of Wampum,  
From the regions of the North-Wind,  
From the kingdom of Wabasso,  
From the land of the White Rabbit.

He had stolen the Belt of Wampum  
From the neck of Mishe-Mokwa,  
From the Great Bear of the mountains, 10  
From the terror of the nations,  
As he lay asleep and cumbrous  
On the summit of the mountains,  
Like a rock with mosses on it,  
Spotted brown and gray with mosses.

Silently he stole upon him  
Till the red nails of the monster  
Almost touched him, almost scared him,  
Till the hot breath of his nostrils  
Warmed the hands of Mudjekeewis, 20  
As he drew the Belt of Wampum  
Over the round ears, that heard not,  
Over the small eyes, that saw not,  
Over the long nose and nostrils,  
The black muffle of the nostrils,  
Out of which the heavy breathing  
Warmed the hands of Mudjekeewis.

Then he swung aloft his war-club,  
Shouted loud and long his war-cry,  
Smote the mighty Mishe-Mokwa 30  
In the middle of the forehead,  
Right between the eyes he smote him.

With the heavy blow bewildered,  
 Rose the Great Bear of the mountains;  
 But his knees beneath him trembled.  
 And he whimpered like a woman,  
 As he reeled and staggered forward,  
 As he sat upon his haunches;  
 And the mighty Mudjekeewis,  
 Standing fearlessly before him,  
 Taunted him in loud derision,  
 Spake disdainfully in this wise: —

‘Hark you, Bear! you are a coward;<sup>1</sup>  
 And no Brave, as you pretended;  
 Else you would not cry and whimper  
 Like a miserable woman!  
 Bear! you know our tribes are hostile,  
 Long have been at war together;  
 Now you find that we are strongest,  
 You go sneaking in the forest,  
 You go hiding in the mountains!  
 Had you conquered me in battle  
 Not a groan would I have uttered;  
 But you, Bear! sit here and whimper,  
 And disgrace your tribe by crying,  
 Like a wretched Shaugodaya,  
 Like a cowardly old woman!’

Then again he raised his war-club,  
 Smote again the Mishe-Mokwa  
 In the middle of his forehead,  
 Broke his skull, as ice is broken  
 When one goes to fish in winter.  
 Thus was slain the Mishe-Mokwa,  
 He the Great Bear of the mountains,  
 He the terror of the nations.

‘Honor be to Mudjekeewis!’  
 With a shout exclaimed the people,  
 ‘Honor be to Mudjekeewis!’  
 Henceforth he shall be the West-Wind,  
 And hereafter and forever  
 Shall he hold supreme dominion  
 Over all the winds of heaven.  
 Call him no more Mudjekeewis,  
 Call him Kabeyun, the West-Wind!’

Thus was Mudjekeewis chosen  
 Father of the Winds of Heaven.  
 For himself he kept the West-Wind,  
 Gave the others to his children;

<sup>1</sup> This anecdote is from Heckewelder. In his account of the Indian Nations, he describes an Indian hunter as addressing a bear in nearly these words. ‘I was present,’ he says, ‘at the delivery of this curious invective; when the hunter had despatched the bear, I asked him how he thought that poor animal could understand what he said to it. “Oh,” said he in answer, “the bear understood me very well; did you not observe how ashamed he looked while I was upbraiding him?”’ — *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. i. p. 240. (Lowermellow.)

Unto Wabun gave the East-Wind,  
 Gave the South to Shawondasee,  
 And the North-Wind, wild and cruel,  
 To the fierce Kabibonokka.

Young and beautiful was Wabun;  
 He it was who brought the morning,  
 He it was whose silver arrows  
 Chased the dark o’er hill and valley;  
 He it was whose cheeks were painted  
 With the brightest streaks of crimson,  
 And whose voice awoke the village,  
 Called the deer and called the hunter.

Lonely in the sky was Wabun;  
 Though the birds sang gayly to him,  
 Though the wild-flowers of the meadow  
 Filled the air with odors for him;  
 Though the forests and the rivers  
 Sang and shouted at his coming,  
 Still his heart was sad within him,  
 For he was alone in heaven.

But one morning, gazing earthward,  
 While the village still was sleeping,  
 And the fog lay on the river,  
 Like a ghost, that goes at sunrise,  
 He beheld a maiden walking  
 All alone upon a meadow,  
 Gathering water-flags and rushes  
 By a river in the meadow.

Every morning, gazing earthward,  
 Still the first thing he beheld there  
 Was her blue eyes looking at him,  
 Two blue lakes among the rushes.  
 And he loved the lonely maiden,  
 Who thus waited for his coming;  
 For they both were solitary,  
 She on earth and he in heaven.

And he wooed her with caresses,  
 Wooed her with his smile of sunshine,  
 With his flattering words he wooed her,  
 With his sighing and his singing,  
 Gentlest whispers in the branches,  
 Softest music, sweetest odors,  
 Till he drew her to his bosom,  
 Folded in his robes of crimson,  
 Till into a star he changed her,  
 Trembling still upon his bosom;  
 And forever in the heavens  
 They are seen together walking,  
 Wabun and the Wabun-Annung,  
 Wabun and the Star of Morning.

But the fierce Kabibonokka  
 Had his dwelling among icebergs,  
 In the everlasting snow-drifts,  
 In the kingdom of Wabasso,  
 In the land of the White Rabbit.



He it was whose hand in Autumn  
 Painted all the trees with scarlet,  
 Stained the leaves with red and yellow;  
 He it was who sent the snow-flakes,  
 Sifting, hissing through the forest,  
 Froze the ponds, the lakes, the rivers,  
 Drove the loon and sea-gull southward, 140  
 Drove the cormorant and curlew  
 To their nests of sedge and sea-tang  
 In the realms of Shawondasee.

Once the fierce Kabibonokka  
 Issued from his lodge of snow-drifts,  
 From his home among the icebergs,  
 And his hair, with snow besprinkled,  
 Streamed behind him like a river,  
 Like a black and wintry river,  
 As he howled and hurried southward, 150  
 Over frozen lakes and moorlands.

There among the reeds and rushes  
 Found he Shingebis, the diver,  
 Trailing strings of fish behind him,  
 O'er the frozen fens and moorlands,  
 Lingered still among the moorlands,  
 Though his tribe had long departed  
 To the land of Shawondasee.

Cried the fierce Kabibonokka,  
 'Who is this that dares to brave me? 160  
 Dares to stay in my dominions,  
 When the Wawa has departed,  
 When the wild-goose has gone southward,  
 And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
 Long ago departed southward?  
 I will go into his wigwam,  
 I will put his smouldering fire out!'

And at night Kabibonokka  
 To the lodge came wild and wailing,  
 Heaped the snow in drifts about it, 170  
 Shouted down into the smoke-flue,  
 Shook the lodge-poles in his fury,  
 Flapped the curtain of the door-way.  
 Shingebis, the diver, feared not,  
 Shingebis, the diver, cared not;  
 Four great logs had he for firewood,  
 One for each moon of the winter,  
 And for food the fishes served him.  
 By his blazing fire he sat there,  
 Warm and merry, eating, laughing, 180  
 Singing, 'O Kabibonokka,  
 You are but my fellow-mortal!'

Then Kabibonokka entered,  
 And though Shingebis, the diver,  
 Felt his presence by the coldness,  
 Felt his icy breath upon him,  
 Still he did not cease his singing,  
 Still he did not leave his laughing,

Only turned the log a little,  
 Only made the fire burn brighter, 190  
 Made the sparks fly up the smoke-flue.

From Kabibonokka's forehead,  
 From his snow-besprinkled tresses,  
 Drops of sweat fell fast and heavy,  
 Making dints upon the ashes,  
 As along the eaves of lodges,  
 As from drooping boughs of hemlock,  
 Drips the melting snow in spring-time,  
 Making hollows in the snow-drifts.

Till at last he rose defeated, 200  
 Could not bear the heat and laughter,  
 Could not bear the merry singing,  
 But rushed headlong through the door-way,  
 Stamped upon the crusted snow-drifts,  
 Stamped upon the lakes and rivers,  
 Made the snow upon them harder,  
 Made the ice upon them thicker,  
 Challenged Shingebis, the diver,  
 To come forth and wrestle with him,  
 To come forth and wrestle naked 210  
 On the frozen fens and moorlands.

Forth went Shingebis, the diver,  
 Wrestled all night with the North-Wind,  
 Wrestled naked on the moorlands  
 With the fierce Kabibonokka,  
 Till his panting breath grew fainter,  
 Till his frozen grasp grew feebler,  
 Till he reeled and staggered backward,  
 And retreated, baffled, beaten, 220  
 To the kingdom of Wabasso,  
 To the land of the White Rabbit,  
 Hearing still the gusty laughter,  
 Hearing Shingebis, the diver,  
 Singing, 'O Kabibonokka,  
 You are but my fellow-mortal!'

Shawondasee, fat and lazy,  
 Had his dwelling far to southward,  
 In the drowsy, dreamy sunshine,  
 In the never-ending Summer.  
 He it was who sent the wood-birds, 230  
 Sent the robin, the Opechee,  
 Sent the bluebird, the Owaissa,  
 Sent the Shawshaw, sent the swallow,  
 Sent the wild-goose, Wawa, northward,  
 Sent the melons and tobacco,  
 And the grapes in purple clusters.

From his pipe the smoke ascending  
 Filled the sky with haze and vapor,  
 Filled the air with dreamy softness,  
 Gave a twinkle to the water, 240  
 Touched the rugged hills with smooth-  
 ness,  
 Brought the tender Indian Summer

To the melancholy north-land,  
In the dreary Moon of Snow-shoes.

Listless, careless Shawondasee !  
In his life he had one shadow,  
In his heart one sorrow had he.  
Once, as he was gazing northward,  
Far away upon a prairie  
He beheld a maiden standing, 250  
Saw a tall and slender maiden  
All alone upon a prairie;  
Brightest green were all her garments,  
And her hair was like the sunshine.

Day by day he gazed upon her,  
Day by day he sighed with passion,  
Day by day his heart within him  
Grew more hot with love and longing  
For the maid with yellow tresses.  
But he was too fat and lazy 260  
To bestir himself and woo her.  
Yes, too indolent and easy  
To pursue her and persuade her;  
So he only gazed upon her,  
Only sat and sighed with passion  
For the maiden of the prairie.

Till one morning, looking northward,  
He beheld her yellow tresses  
Changed and covered o'er with white-  
ness,

Covered as with whitest snow-flakes. 270  
'Ah ! my brother from the North-land,  
From the kingdom of Wabasso,  
From the land of the White Rabbit !  
You have stolen the maiden from me,  
You have laid your hand upon her,  
You have wooed and won my maiden,  
With your stories of the North-land !'

Thus the wretched Shawondasee  
Breathed into the air his sorrow;  
And the South-Wind o'er the prairie 280  
Wandered warm with sighs of passion,  
With the sighs of Shawondasee,  
Till the air seemed full of snow-flakes,  
Full of thistle-down the prairie,  
And the maid with hair like sunshine  
Vanished from his sight forever;  
Never more did Shawondasee  
See the maid with yellow tresses !

Poor, deluded Shawondasee !  
'T was no woman that you gazed at, 290  
'T was no maiden that you sighed for,  
'T was the prairie dandelion  
That through all the dreamy Summer  
You had gazed at with such longing,  
You had sighed for with such passion,  
And had puffed away forever,

Blown into the air with sighing.  
Ah ! deluded Shawondasee !

Thus the Four Winds were divided;  
Thus the sons of Mudjekeewis 300  
Had their stations in the heavens,  
At the corners of the heavens;  
For himself the West-Wind only  
Kept the mighty Mudjekeewis.

### III

#### HIAWATHA'S CHILDHOOD

DOWNWARD through the evening twilight,  
In the days that are forgotten,  
In the unremembered ages,  
From the full moon fell Nokomis,  
Fell the beautiful Nokomis,  
She a wife, but not a mother.

She was sporting with her women,  
Swinging in a swing of grape-vines,  
When her rival the rejected, 310  
Full of jealousy and hatred,  
Cut the leafy swing asunder,  
Cut in twain the twisted grape-vines,  
And Nokomis fell affrighted  
Downward through the evening twilight,  
On the Muskoday, the meadow,  
On the prairie full of blossoms.  
'See ! a star falls !' said the people;  
'From the sky a star is falling !'

There among the ferns and mosses,  
There among the prairie lilies, 320  
On the Muskoday, the meadow,  
In the moonlight and the starlight,  
Fair Nokomis bore a daughter.  
And she called her name Wenonah,  
As the first-born of her daughters.  
And the daughter of Nokomis  
Grew up like the prairie lilies,  
Grew a tall and slender maiden,  
With the beauty of the moonlight,  
With the beauty of the starlight. 330

And Nokomis warned her often,  
Saying oft, and oft repeating,  
'Oh, beware of Mudjekeewis,  
Of the West-Wind, Mudjekeewis;  
Listen not to what he tells you;  
Lie not down upon the meadow,  
Stoop not down among the lilies,  
Lest the West-Wind come and harm you !'

But she heeded not the warning,  
Heeded not those words of wisdom, 40  
And the West-Wind came at evening,



Walking lightly o'er the prairie,  
 Whispering to the leaves and blossoms,  
 Bending low the flowers and grasses,  
 Found the beautiful Wenonah,  
 Lying there among the lilies,  
 Wooed her with his words of sweetness,  
 Wooed her with his soft caresses,  
 Till she bore a son in sorrow,  
 Bore a son of love and sorrow.

50

Thus was born my Hiawatha,  
 Thus was born the child of wonder;  
 But the daughter of Nokomis,  
 Hiawatha's gentle mother,  
 In her anguish died deserted  
 By the West-Wind, false and faithless,  
 By the heartless Mudjekeewis.

For her daughter long and loudly  
 Wailed and wept the sad Nokomis;  
 'Oh that I were dead!' she murmured,  
 'Oh that I were dead, as thou art!  
 No more work, and no more weeping,  
 Wahonowin! Wahonowin!'

60

By the shores of Gitche Gumee,  
 By the shining Big-Sea-Water,  
 Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,  
 Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis.  
 Dark behind it rose the forest,  
 Rose the black and gloomy pine-trees,  
 Rose the firs with cones upon them;  
 Bright before it beat the water,  
 Beat the clear and sunny water,  
 Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water.

70

There the wrinkled old Nokomis  
 Nursed the little Hiawatha,  
 Rocked him in his linden cradle,  
 Bedded soft in moss and rushes,  
 Safely bound with reindeer sinews;  
 Stilled his fretful wail by saying,  
 'Hush! the Naked Bear will hear thee!' 80  
 Lulled him into slumber, singing,  
 'Ewa-yea! my little owlet!  
 Who is this, that lights the wigwam?  
 With his great eyes lights the wigwam?  
 Ewa-yea! my little owlet!'

80

Many things Nokomis taught him  
 Of the stars that shine in heaven;  
 Showed him Ishkoodah, the comet,  
 Ishkoodah, with fiery tresses;  
 Showed the Death-Dance of the spirits, 90  
 Warriors with their plumes and war-  
 clubs,

90

Flaring far away to northward  
 In the frosty nights of Winter;  
 Showed the broad white road in heaven,  
 Pathway of the ghosts, the shadows,

Running straight across the heavens,  
 Crowded with the ghosts, the shadows.

At the door on summer evenings  
 Sat the little Hiawatha;  
 Heard the whispering of the pine-trees,  
 Heard the lapping of the waters, 101  
 Sounds of music, words of wonder;  
 'Minne-wawa!' said the pine-trees,  
 'Mudway-aushka!' said the water.

Saw the fire-fly, Wah-wah-taysee,  
 Flitting through the dusk of evening,  
 With the twinkle of its candle  
 Lighting up the brakes and bushes,  
 And he sang the song of children,  
 Sang the song Nokomis taught him: 110  
 'Wah-wah-taysee, little fire-fly,  
 Little, flitting, white-fire insect,  
 Little, dancing, white-fire creature,  
 Light me with your little candle,  
 Ere upon my bed I lay me,  
 Ere in sleep I close my eyelids!'

101

110

Saw the moon rise from the water  
 Rippling, rounding from the water,  
 Saw the flecks and shadows on it,  
 Whispered, 'What is that, Nokomis?' 120  
 And the good Nokomis answered:

120

'Once a warrior, very angry,  
 Seized his grandmother, and threw her  
 Up into the sky at midnight;  
 Right against the moon he threw her;  
 'T is her body that you see there.'

Saw the rainbow in the heaven,  
 In the eastern sky, the rainbow,  
 Whispered, 'What is that, Nokomis?'  
 And the good Nokomis answered: 130  
 'T is the heaven of flowers you see there;  
 All the wild-flowers of the forest,  
 All the lilies of the prairie,  
 When on earth they fade and perish,  
 Blossom in that heaven above us.'

130

When he heard the owls at midnight,  
 Hooting, laughing in the forest,  
 'What is that?' he cried in terror,  
 'What is that,' he said, 'Nokomis?'  
 And the good Nokomis answered: 140  
 'That is but the owl and owlet,  
 Talking in their native language,  
 Talking, scolding at each other.'

140

Then the little Hiawatha  
 Learned of every bird its language,  
 Learned their names and all their secrets,  
 How they built their nests in Summer,  
 Where they hid themselves in Winter,  
 Talked with them whene'er he met them,  
 Called them 'Hiawatha's Chickens.' 150

150

Of all beasts he learned the language,  
 Learned their names and all their secrets,  
 How the beavers built their lodges,  
 Where the squirrels hid their acorns,  
 How the reindeer ran so swiftly,  
 Why the rabbit was so timid,  
 Talked with them whene'er he met them,  
 Called them 'Hiawatha's Brothers.'

Then Iagoo, the great boaster,  
 He the marvellous story-teller, 160  
 He the traveller and the talker,  
 He the friend of old Nokomis,  
 Made a bow for Hiawatha;  
 From a branch of ash he made it,  
 From an oak-bough made the arrows,  
 Tipped with flint, and winged with feathers,  
 And the cord he made of deer-skin.

Then he said to Hiawatha:  
 'Go, my son, into the forest,  
 Where the red deer herd together, 170  
 Kill for us a famous roebuck,  
 Kill for us a deer with antlers!'

Forth into the forest straightway  
 All alone walked Hiawatha  
 Proudly, with his bow and arrows;  
 And the birds sang round him, o'er him,  
 'Do not shoot us, Hiawatha!'  
 Sang the robin, the Opechee,  
 Sang the bluebird, the Owaissa,  
 'Do not shoot us, Hiawatha!' 180

Up the oak-tree, close beside him,  
 Sprang the squirrel, Adjidaumo,  
 In and out among the branches,  
 Coughed and chattered from the oak-tree,  
 Laughed, and said between his laughing,  
 'Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!'

And the rabbit from his pathway  
 Leaped aside, and at a distance  
 Sat erect upon his haunches,  
 Half in fear and half in frolic, 190  
 Saying to the little hunter,  
 'Do not shoot me, Hiawatha!'

But he heeded not, nor heard them,  
 For his thoughts were with the red deer;  
 On their tracks his eyes were fastened,  
 Leading downward to the river,  
 To the ford across the river,  
 And as one in slumber walked he.

Hidden in the alder-bushes,  
 There he waited till the deer came, 200  
 Till he saw two antlers lifted,  
 Saw two eyes look from the thicket,  
 Saw two nostrils point to windward,  
 And a deer came down the pathway,  
 Flecked with leafy light and shadow.

And his heart within him fluttered,  
 Trembled like the leaves above him,  
 Like the birch-leaf palpitated,  
 As the deer came down the pathway.

Then, upon one knee uprising, 210  
 Hiawatha aimed an arrow;  
 Scarce a twig moved with his motion,  
 Scarce a leaf was stirred or rustled,  
 But the wary roebuck started,  
 Stamped with all his hoofs together,  
 Listened with one foot uplifted,  
 Leaped as if to meet the arrow;  
 Ah! the singing, fatal arrow,  
 Like a wasp it buzzed and stung him!

Dead he lay there in the forest, 220  
 By the ford across the river;  
 Beat his timid heart no longer,  
 But the heart of Hiawatha  
 Throbbled and shouted and exulted,  
 As he bore the red deer homeward,  
 And Iagoo and Nokomis  
 Hailed his coming with applauses.

From the red deer's hide Nokomis  
 Made a cloak for Hiawatha,  
 From the red deer's flesh Nokomis 230  
 Made a banquet to his honor.  
 All the village came and feasted,  
 All the guests praised Hiawatha,  
 Called him Strong-Heart, Soan-ge-taha!  
 Called him Loon-Heart, Mahn-go-taysee!

## IV

## HIAWATHA AND MUDJEKEEWIS

OUT of childhood into manhood  
 Now had grown my Hiawatha,  
 Skilled in all the craft of hunters,  
 Learned in all the lore of old men,  
 In all youthful sports and pastimes,  
 In all manly arts and labors.

Swift of foot was Hiawatha;  
 He could shoot an arrow from him,  
 And run forward with such fleetness,  
 That the arrow fell behind him! 10  
 Strong of arm was Hiawatha;  
 He could shoot ten arrows upward,  
 Shoot them with such strength and swift-  
 ness,

That the tenth had left the bow-string  
 Ere the first to earth had fallen!

He had mittens, Minjekahwun,  
 Magic mittens made of deer-skin;  
 When upon his hands he wore them,

He could smite the rocks asunder,  
 He could grind them into powder.  
 He had moccasins enchanted,  
 Magic moccasins of deer-skin;  
 When he bound them round his ankles,  
 When upon his feet he tied them,  
 At each stride a mile he measured !

Much he questioned old Nokomis  
 Of his father Mudjekeewis;  
 Learned from her the fatal secret  
 Of the beauty of his mother,  
 Of the falsehood of his father;  
 And his heart was hot within him,  
 Like a living coal his heart was.

Then he said to old Nokomis,  
 ' I will go to Mudjekeewis,  
 See how fares it with my father,  
 At the doorways of the West-Wind,  
 At the portals of the Sunset ! '

From his lodge went Hiawatha,  
 Dressed for travel, armed for hunting;  
 Dressed in deer-skin shirt and leggings,  
 Richly wrought with quills and wampum;  
 On his head his eagle-feathers,  
 Round his waist his belt of wampum,  
 In his hand his bow of ash-wood,  
 Strung with sinews of the reindeer;  
 In his quiver oaken arrows,  
 Tipped with jasper, winged with feathers;  
 With his mittens, Minjekahwun,  
 With his moccasins enchanted.

Warning said the old Nokomis,  
 ' Go not forth, O Hiawatha !  
 To the kingdom of the West-Wind,  
 To the realms of Mudjekeewis,  
 Lest he harm you with his magic,  
 Lest he kill you with his cunning ! '

But the fearless Hiawatha  
 Heeded not her woman's warning;  
 Forth he strode into the forest,  
 At each stride a mile he measured;  
 Lurid seemed the sky above him,  
 Lurid seemed the earth beneath him,  
 Hot and close the air around him,  
 Filled with smoke and fiery vapors,  
 As of burning woods and prairies,  
 For his heart was hot within him,  
 Like a living coal his heart was.

So he journeyed westward, westward,  
 Left the fleetest deer behind him,  
 Left the antelope and bison;  
 Crossed the rushing Esconaba,  
 Crossed the mighty Mississippi,  
 Passed the Mountains of the Prairie,  
 Passed the land of Crows and Foxes,

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Passed the dwellings of the Blackfeet,  
 Came unto the Rocky Mountains,  
 To the kingdom of the West-Wind,  
 Where upon the gusty summits  
 Sat the ancient Mudjekeewis,  
 Ruler of the winds of heaven.

Filled with awe was Hiawatha  
 At the aspect of his father.  
 On the air about him wildly  
 Tossed and streamed his cloudy tresses,  
 Gleamed like drifting snow his tresses,  
 Glared like Ishkoodah, the comet,  
 Like the star with fiery tresses.

Filled with joy was Mudjekeewis  
 When he looked on Hiawatha,  
 Saw his youth rise up before him  
 In the face of Hiawatha,  
 Saw the beauty of Wenonah  
 From the grave rise up before him.

' Welcome ! ' said he, ' Hiawatha,  
 To the kingdom of the West-Wind !  
 Long have I been waiting for you !  
 Youth is lovely, age is lonely,  
 Youth is fiery, age is frosty;  
 You bring back the days departed,  
 You bring back my youth of passion,  
 And the beautiful Wenonah ! '

Many days they talked together,  
 Questioned, listened, waited, answered;  
 Much the mighty Mudjekeewis  
 Boasted of his ancient prowess,  
 Of his perilous adventures,  
 His indomitable courage,  
 His invulnerable body.

Patiently sat Hiawatha,  
 Listening to his father's boasting;  
 With a smile he sat and listened,  
 Uttered neither threat nor menace,  
 Neither word nor look betrayed him,  
 But his heart was hot within him,  
 Like a living coal his heart was.

Then he said, ' O Mudjekeewis,  
 Is there nothing that can harm you ?  
 Nothing that you are afraid of ? '  
 And the mighty Mudjekeewis,  
 Grand and gracious in his boasting,  
 Answered, saying, ' There is nothing,  
 Nothing but the black rock yonder,  
 Nothing but the fatal Wawbeek ! '

And he looked at Hiawatha  
 With a wise look and benignant,  
 With a countenance paternal,  
 Looked with pride upon the beauty  
 Of his tall and graceful figure,  
 Saying, ' O my Hiawatha ! '

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Is there anything can harm you?  
Anything you are afraid of?'

130

But the wary Hiawatha  
Paused awhile, as if uncertain,  
Held his peace, as if resolving,  
And then answered, 'There is nothing,  
Nothing but the bulrush yonder,  
Nothing but the great Apukwa!

And as Mudjekeewis, rising,  
Stretched his hand to pluck the bul-  
rush,

Hiawatha cried in terror,  
Cried in well-dissembled terror,

140

'Kago! kago! do not touch it!'  
'Ah, kaween!' said Mudjekeewis,  
'No indeed, I will not touch it!'

Then they talked of other matters;  
First of Hiawatha's brothers,  
First of Wabun, of the East-Wind,  
Of the South-Wind, Shawondasee,  
Of the North, Kabibonokka;  
Then of Hiawatha's mother,  
Of the beautiful Wenonah,  
Of her birth upon the meadow,  
Of her death, as old Nokomis  
Had remembered and related.

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And he cried, 'O Mudjekeewis,  
It was you who killed Wenonah,  
Took her young life and her beauty,  
Broke the Lily of the Prairie,  
Trampled it beneath your footsteps;  
You confess it! you confess it!'  
And the mighty Mudjekeewis  
Tossed upon the wind his tresses,  
Bowed his hoary head in anguish,  
With a silent nod assented.

160

Then up started Hiawatha,  
And with threatening look and gesture  
Laid his hand upon the black rock,  
On the fatal Wawbeek laid it,  
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,  
Rent the jutting crag asunder,  
Smote and crushed it into fragments,  
Hurled them madly at his father,  
The remorseful Mudjekeewis,  
For his heart was hot within him,  
Like a living coal his heart was.

170

But the ruler of the West-Wind  
Blew the fragments backward from him,  
With the breathing of his nostrils,  
With the tempest of his anger,  
Blew them back at his assailant;  
Seized the bulrush, the Apukwa,  
Dragged it with its roots and fibres  
From the margin of the meadow,

180

From its ooze the giant bulrush;  
Long and loud laughed Hiawatha!

Then began the deadly conflict,  
Hand to hand among the mountains;  
From his eyry screamed the eagle,  
The Keneu, the great war-eagle,  
Sat upon the crags around them,  
Wheeling flapped his wings above them.

190

Like a tall tree in the tempest  
Bent and lashed the giant bulrush;  
And in masses huge and heavy  
Crashing fell the fatal Wawbeek;  
Till the earth shook with the tumult  
And confusion of the battle,  
And the air was full of shoutings,  
And the thunder of the mountains,  
Starting, answered, 'Baim-wawa!'

Back retreated Mudjekeewis,  
Rushing westward o'er the mountains,  
Stumbling westward down the mountains,  
Three whole days retreated fighting,  
Still pursued by Hiawatha  
To the doorways of the West-Wind,  
To the portals of the Sunset,  
To the earth's remotest border,  
Where into the empty spaces  
Sinks the sun, as a flamingo  
Drops into her nest at nightfall  
In the melancholy marshes.

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'Hold!' at length cried Mudjekeewis,  
'Hold, my son, my Hiawatha!  
'T is impossible to kill me,  
For you cannot kill the immortal.  
I have put you to this trial,  
But to know and prove your courage;  
Now receive the prize of valor!

'Go back to your home and people,  
Live among them, toil among them,  
Cleanse the earth from all that harms it,  
Clear the fishing-grounds and rivers,  
Slay all monsters and magicians,  
All the Wendigoes, the giants,  
All the serpents, the Kenabeeks,  
As I slew the Mishe-Mokwa,  
Slew the Great Bear of the mountains.

220

'And at last when Death draws near you,  
When the awful eyes of Pauguk  
Glare upon you in the darkness,  
I will share my kingdom with you,  
Ruler shall you be thenceforward  
Of the Northwest-Wind, Keewaydin,  
Of the home-wind, the Keewaydin.'

230

Thus was fought that famous battle  
In the dreadful days of Shah-shah,  
In the days long since departed,

In the kingdom of the West-Wind.  
Still the hunter sees its traces  
Scattered far o'er hill and valley; 240  
Sees the giant bulrush growing  
By the ponds and water-courses,  
Sees the masses of the Wawbeek  
Lying still in every valley.

Homeward now went Hiawatha;  
Pleasant was the landscape round him,  
Pleasant was the air above him,  
For the bitterness of anger  
Had departed wholly from him,  
From his brain the thought of vengeance, 250  
From his heart the burning fever.

Only once his pace he slackened,  
Only once he paused or halted,  
Paused to purchase heads of arrows  
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,  
In the land of the Dacotahs,  
Where the Falls of Minnehaha  
Flash and gleam among the oak-trees,  
Laugh and leap into the valley.<sup>1</sup>

There the ancient Arrow-maker 260  
Made his arrow-heads of sandstone,  
Arrow-heads of chalcedony,  
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper,  
Smoothed and sharpened at the edges,  
Hard and polished, keen and costly.

With him dwelt his dark-eyed daughter  
Wayward as the Minnehaha,  
With her moods of shade and sunshine,  
Eyes that smiled and frowned alternate,  
Feet as rapid as the river, 270  
Tresses flowing like the water,  
And as musical a laughter:  
And he named her from the river,  
From the water-fall he named her,  
Minnehaha, Laughing Water.

Was it then for heads of arrows,  
Arrow-heads of chalcedony,  
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper,  
That my Hiawatha halted 280  
In the land of the Dacotahs?

Was it not to see the maiden,  
See the face of Laughing Water  
Peeping from behind the curtain,  
Hear the rustling of her garments  
From behind the waving curtain,

<sup>1</sup> 'The scenery about Fort Snelling is rich in beauty. The Falls of St. Anthony are familiar to travellers, and to readers of Indian sketches. Between the fort and these falls are the "Little Falls," forty feet in height, on a stream that empties into the Mississippi. The Indians called them Mine-hah-hah, or "laughing waters."' — Mrs. Eastman's *Dacotah, or Legends of the Sioux*, Introd. p. ii. (LONGFELLOW.)

As one sees the Minnehaha  
Gleaming, glancing through the branches,  
As one hears the Laughing Water  
From behind its screen of branches?

Who shall say what thoughts and visions  
Fill the fiery brains of young men? 290  
Who shall say what dreams of beauty  
Filled the heart of Hiawatha?  
All he told to old Nokomis,  
When he reached the lodge at sunset,  
Was the meeting with his father,  
Was his fight with Mudjekeewis;  
Not a word he said of arrows,  
Not a word of Laughing Water.

## V

HIAWATHA'S FASTING<sup>2</sup>

You shall hear how Hiawatha  
Prayed and fasted in the forest,  
Not for greater skill in hunting,  
Not for greater craft in fishing,  
Not for triumphs in the battle,  
And renown among the warriors,  
But for profit of the people,  
For advantage of the nations.

First he built a lodge for fasting,  
Built a wigwam in the forest, 30  
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,  
In the blithe and pleasant Spring-time,  
In the Moon of Leaves he built it,  
And, with dreams and visions many,  
Seven whole days and nights he fasted.

On the first day of his fasting  
Through the leafy woods he wandered;  
Saw the deer start from the thicket,  
Saw the rabbit in his burrow,  
Heard the pheasant, Bena, drumming, 20  
Heard the squirrel, Adjidaumo,  
Rattling in his hoard of acorns,  
Saw the pigeon, the Omeme,  
Building nests among the pine-trees,  
And in flocks the wild-goose, Wawa,  
Flying to the fen-lands northward,  
Whirring, wailing far above him.  
'Master of Life!' he cried, desponding,  
'Must our lives depend on these things?'

On the next day of his fasting 30  
By the river's brink he wandered,  
Through the Muskoday, the meadow,  
Saw the wild rice, Mahnomonee,  
Saw the blueberry, Meenahga,  
And the strawberry, Odahmin,

<sup>2</sup> See Longfellow's note on section xili, p. 188.



And the gooseberry, Shabbomin,  
 And the grape-vine, the Bemahgut,  
 Trailing o'er the alder-branches,  
 Filling all the air with fragrance !  
 ' Master of Life ! ' he cried, desponding, 40  
 ' Must our lives depend on these things ? '

On the third day of his fasting  
 By the lake he sat and pondered,  
 By the still, transparent water;  
 Saw the sturgeon, Nahma, leaping,  
 Scattering drops like beads of wampum,  
 Saw the yellow perch, the Sahwa,  
 Like a sunbeam in the water,  
 Saw the pike, the Maskenozha,  
 And the herring, Okahahwis, 50  
 And the Shawgashee, the craw-fish !  
 ' Master of Life ! ' he cried, desponding,  
 ' Must our lives depend on these things ? '

On the fourth day of his fasting  
 In his lodge he lay exhausted;  
 From his couch of leaves and branches  
 Gazing with half-open eyelids,  
 Full of shadowy dreams and visions,  
 On the dizzy, swimming landscape,  
 On the gleaming of the water, 60  
 On the splendor of the sunset.

And he saw a youth approaching,  
 Dressed in garments green and yellow,  
 Coming through the purple twilight,  
 Through the splendor of the sunset;  
 Plumes of green bent o'er his forehead,  
 And his hair was soft and golden.

Standing at the open doorway,  
 Long he looked at Hiawatha,  
 Looked with pity and compassion 70  
 On his wasted form and features,  
 And, in accents like the sighing  
 Of the South-Wind in the tree-tops,  
 Said he, ' O my Hiawatha !  
 All your prayers are heard in heaven,  
 For you pray not like the others;  
 Not for greater skill in hunting,  
 Not for greater craft in fishing,  
 Not for triumph in the battle, 80  
 Nor renown among the warriors,  
 But for profit of the people,  
 For advantage of the nations.

' From the Master of Life descending,  
 I, the friend of man, Mondamin,  
 Come to warn you and instruct you,  
 How by struggle and by labor  
 You shall gain what you have prayed for.  
 Rise up from your bed of branches,  
 Rise, O youth, and wrestle with me ! '

Faint with famine, Hiawatha 90

Started from his bed of branches,  
 From the twilight of his wigwam  
 Forth into the flush of sunset  
 Came, and wrestled with Mondamin;  
 At his touch he felt new courage  
 Throbbing in his brain and bosom,  
 Felt new life and hope and vigor  
 Run through every nerve and fibre.

So they wrestled there together  
 In the glory of the sunset, 100  
 And the more they strove and struggled,  
 Stronger still grew Hiawatha;  
 Till the darkness fell around them,  
 And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
 From her nest among the pine-trees,  
 Gave a cry of lamentation,  
 Gave a scream of pain and famine.

' 'T is enough ! ' then said Mondamin,  
 Smiling upon Hiawatha,  
 ' But to-morrow, when the sun sets, 110  
 I will come again to try you.'  
 And he vanished, and was seen not;  
 Whether sinking as the rain sinks,  
 Whether rising as the mists rise,  
 Hiawatha saw not, knew not,  
 Only saw that he had vanished,  
 Leaving him alone and fainting,  
 With the misty lake below him,  
 And the reeling stars above him.

On the morrow and the next day, 120  
 When the sun through heaven descending,  
 Like a red and burning cinder  
 From the hearth of the Great Spirit,  
 Fell into the western waters,  
 Came Mondamin for the trial,  
 For the strife with Hiawatha;  
 Came as silent as the dew comes,  
 From the empty air appearing,  
 Into empty air returning, 130  
 Taking shape when earth it touches,  
 But invisible to all men  
 In its coming and its going.

Thrice they wrestled there together  
 In the glory of the sunset,  
 Till the darkness fell around them,  
 Till the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
 From her nest among the pine-trees,  
 Uttered her loud cry of famine,  
 And Mondamin paused to listen.

Tall and beautiful he stood there, 40  
 In his garments green and yellow;  
 To and fro his plumes above him  
 Waved and nodded with his breathing,  
 And the sweat of the encounter  
 Stood like drops of dew upon him.

And he cried, 'O Hiawatha !  
 Bravely have you wrestled with me,  
 Thrice have wrestled stoutly with me,  
 And the Master of Life, who sees us,  
 He will give to you the triumph !' 150

Then he smiled, and said : 'To-morrow  
 Is the last day of your conflict,  
 Is the last day of your fasting.  
 You will conquer and o'ercome me;  
 Make a bed for me to lie in,  
 Where the rain may fall upon me,  
 Where the sun may come and warm me;  
 Strip these garments, green and yellow,  
 Strip this nodding plumage from me,  
 Lay me in the earth, and make it 160  
 Soft and loose and light above me.

'Let no hand disturb my slumber,  
 Let no weed nor worm molest me,  
 Let not Kahgahgee, the raven,  
 Come to haunt me and molest me,  
 Only come yourself to watch me,  
 Till I wake, and start, and quicken,  
 Till I leap into the sunshine.'

And thus saying, he departed;  
 Peacefully slept Hiawatha, 170  
 But he heard the Wawonaissa,  
 Heard the whippoorwill complaining,  
 Perched upon his lonely wigwam;  
 Heard the rushing Sebowisha,  
 Heard the rivulet rippling near him,  
 Talking to the darksome forest;  
 Heard the sighing of the branches,  
 As they lifted and subsided  
 At the passing of the night-wind,  
 Heard them, as one hears in slumber 180  
 Far-off murmurs, dreamy whispers:  
 Peacefully slept Hiawatha.

On the morrow came Nokomis,  
 On the seventh day of his fasting,  
 Came with food for Hiawatha,  
 Came imploring and bewailing,  
 Lest his hunger should o'ercome him,  
 Lest his fasting should be fatal.

But he tasted not, and touched not,  
 Only said to her, 'Nokomis, 190  
 Wait until the sun is setting,  
 Till the darkness falls around us,  
 Till the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
 Crying from the desolate marshes,  
 Tells us that the day is ended.'

Homeward weeping went Nokomis,  
 Sorrowing for her Hiawatha,  
 Fearing lest his strength should fail him,  
 Lest his fasting should be fatal.  
 He meanwhile sat weary waiting 200

For the coming of Mondamin,  
 Till the shadows, pointing eastward,  
 Lengthened over field and forest,  
 Till the sun dropped from the heaven,  
 Floating on the waters westward,  
 As a red leaf in the Autumn  
 Falls and floats upon the water,  
 Falls and sinks into its bosom.

And behold ! the young Mondamin,  
 With his soft and shining tresses, 210  
 With his garments green and yellow,  
 With his long and glossy plumage,  
 Stood and beckoned at the doorway.  
 And as one in slumber walking,  
 Pale and haggard, but undaunted,  
 From the wigwam Hiawatha  
 Came and wrestled with Mondamin.

Round about him spun the landscape,  
 Sky and forest reeled together,  
 And his strong heart leaped within him, 220  
 As the sturgeon leaps and struggles  
 In a net to break its meshes.

Like a ring of fire around him  
 Blazed and flared the red horizon,  
 And a hundred suns seemed looking  
 At the combat of the wrestlers.

Suddenly upon the greensward  
 All alone stood Hiawatha,  
 Panting with his wild exertion,  
 Palpitating with the struggle; 230  
 And before him breathless, lifeless,  
 Lay the youth, with hair dishevelled,  
 Plumage torn, and garments tattered,  
 Dead he lay there in the sunset.

And victorious Hiawatha  
 Made the grave as he commanded,  
 Stripped the garments from Mondamin,  
 Stripped his tattered plumage from him,  
 Laid him in the earth, and made it  
 Soft and loose and light above him; 240  
 And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
 From the melancholy moorlands,  
 Gave a cry of lamentation,  
 Gave a cry of pain and anguish !

Homeward then went Hiawatha  
 To the lodge of old Nokomis,  
 And the seven days of his fasting  
 Were accomplished and completed.  
 But the place was not forgotten  
 Where he wrestled with Mondamin; 250  
 Nor forgotten nor neglected  
 Was the grave where lay Mondamin,  
 Sleeping in the rain and sunshine,  
 Where his scattered plumes and garments  
 Faded in the rain and sunshine.



Day by day did Hiawatha  
Go to wait and watch beside it;  
Kept the dark mould soft above it,  
Kept it clean from weeds and insects,  
Drove away, with scoffs and shoutings, 260  
Kahgahgee, the king of ravens.

Till at length a small green feather  
From the earth shot slowly upward,  
Then another and another,  
And before the Summer ended  
Stood the maize in all its beauty,  
With its shining robes about it,  
And its long, soft, yellow tresses;  
And in rapture Hiawatha  
Cried aloud, 'It is Mondamin! 270  
Yes, the friend of man, Mondamin!'

Then he called to old Nokomis  
And Iagoo, the great boaster,  
Showed them where the maize was grow-  
ing,

Told them of his wondrous vision,  
Of his wrestling and his triumph,  
Of this new gift to the nations,  
Which should be their food forever.

And still later, when the Autumn  
Changed the long, green leaves to yellow, 280  
And the soft and juicy kernels  
Grew like wampum hard and yellow,  
Then the ripened ears he gathered,  
Stripped the withered husks from off  
them,

As he once had stripped the wrestler,  
Gave the first Feast of Mondamin,  
And made known unto the people  
This new gift of the Great Spirit.

## VI

### HIAWATHA'S FRIENDS

Two good friends had Hiawatha,  
Singled out from all the others,  
Bound to him in closest union,  
And to whom he gave the right hand  
Of his heart, in joy and sorrow;  
Chibiabos, the musician,  
And the very strong man, Kwasind.

Straight between them ran the pathway,  
Never grew the grass upon it;  
Singing birds, that utter falsehoods, 30  
Story-tellers, mischief-makers,  
Found no eager ear to listen,  
Could not breed ill-will between them,  
For they kept each other's counsel,

Spake with naked hearts together,  
Pondering much and much contriving  
How the tribes of men might prosper.

Most beloved by Hiawatha  
Was the gentle Chibiabos,  
He the best of all musicians, 2  
He the sweetest of all singers.  
Beautiful and childlike was he,  
Brave as man is, soft as woman,  
Pliant as a wand of willow,  
Stately as a deer with antlers.

When he sang, the village listened;  
All the warriors gathered round him,  
All the women came to hear him;  
Now he stirred their souls to passion,  
Now he melted them to pity. 30

From the hollow reeds he fashioned  
Flutes so musical and mellow,  
That the brook, the Sebowisha,  
Ceased to murmur in the woodland,  
That the wood-birds ceased from singing,  
And the squirrel, Adjidaumo,  
Ceased his chatter in the oak-tree,  
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,  
Sat upright to look and listen.

Yes, the brook, the Sebowisha, 40  
Pausing, said, 'O Chibiabos,  
Teach my waves to flow in music,  
Softly as your words in singing!'

Yes, the bluebird, the Owaissa,  
Envious, said, 'O Chibiabos,  
Teach me tones as wild and wayward,  
Teach me songs as full of frenzy!'

Yes, the robin, the Opechee,  
Joyous, said, 'O Chibiabos,  
Teach me tones as sweet and tender, 50  
Teach me songs as full of gladness!'

And the whippoorwill, Wawonaissa,  
Sobbing, said, 'O Chibiabos,  
Teach me tones as melancholy,  
Teach me songs as full of sadness!'

All the many sounds of nature  
Borrowed sweetness from his singing;  
All the hearts of men were softened  
By the pathos of his music;  
For he sang of peace and freedom, 60  
Sang of beauty, love, and longing;  
Sang of death, and life undying  
In the Islands of the Blessed,  
In the kingdom of Ponemah,  
In the land of the Hereafter.

Very dear to Hiawatha  
Was the gentle Chibiabos,  
He the best of all musicians,  
He the sweetest of all singers;

For his gentleness he loved him,  
And the magic of his singing.

Dear, too, unto Hiawatha  
Was the very strong man, Kwasind,  
He the strongest of all mortals,  
He the mightiest among many;  
For his very strength he loved him,  
For his strength allied to goodness.

Idle in his youth was Kwasind,  
Very listless, dull, and dreamy,  
Never played with other children,  
Never fished and never hunted,  
Not like other children was he;  
But they saw that much he fasted,  
Much his Manito entreated,  
Much besought his Guardian Spirit.

'Lazy Kwasind!' said his mother,  
'In my work you never help me!  
In the Summer you are roaming  
Idly in the fields and forests;  
In the Winter you are cowering  
O'er the firebrands in the wigwam!  
In the coldest days of Winter  
I must break the ice for fishing;  
With my nets you never help me!  
At the door my nets are hanging,  
Dripping, freezing with the water;  
Go and wring them, Yenadizze!  
Go and dry them in the sunshine!'

Slowly, from the ashes, Kwasind  
Rose, but made no angry answer;  
From the lodge went forth in silence,  
Took the nets, that hung together,  
Dripping, freezing at the doorway;  
Like a wisp of straw he wrung them,  
Like a wisp of straw he broke them,  
Could not wring them without breaking,  
Such the strength was in his fingers.

'Lazy Kwasind!' said his father,  
'In the hunt you never help me;  
Every bow you touch is broken,  
Snapped asunder every arrow;  
Yet come with me to the forest,  
You shall bring the hunting home-  
ward.'

Down a narrow pass they wandered,  
Where a brooklet led them onward,  
Where the trail of deer and bison  
Marked the soft mud on the margin,  
Till they found all further passage  
Shut against them, barred securely  
By the trunks of trees uprooted,  
Lying lengthwise, lying crosswise,  
And forbidding further passage.

'We must go back,' said the old man,

70 'O'er these logs we cannot clamber;  
Not a woodchuck could get through them,  
Not a squirrel clamber o'er them!'  
And straightway his pipe he lighted,  
And sat down to smoke and ponder.  
But before his pipe was finished,  
Lo! the path was cleared before him; 130  
All the trunks had Kwasind lifted,  
To the right hand, to the left hand,  
Shot the pine-trees swift as arrows,  
Hurled the cedars light as lances.

80 'Lazy Kwasind!' said the young men,  
As they sported in the meadow:  
'Why stand idly looking at us,  
Leaning on the rock behind you?  
Come and wrestle with the others,  
Let us pitch the quoit together!' 140

90 Lazy Kwasind made no answer,  
To their challenge made no answer,  
Only rose, and slowly turning,  
Seized the huge rock in his fingers,  
Tore it from its deep foundation,  
Poised it in the air a moment,  
Pitched it sheer into the river,  
Sheer into the swift Pauwating,  
Where it still is seen in Summer.

Once as down that foaming river, 150  
Down the rapids of Pauwating,  
Kwasind sailed with his companions,  
In the stream he saw a beaver,  
Saw Ahmeek, the King of Beavers,  
Struggling with the rushing currents,  
Rising, sinking in the water.

Without speaking, without pausing,  
Kwasind leaped into the river,  
Plunged beneath the bubbling surface,  
Through the whirlpools chased the beaver,  
Followed him among the islands, 161  
Stayed so long beneath the water,  
That his terrified companions  
Cried, 'Alas! good-by to Kwasind!  
We shall never more see Kwasind!'  
But he reappeared triumphant,  
And upon his shining shoulders  
Brought the beaver, dead and drip-  
ping,

Brought the King of all the Beavers.

And these two, as I have told you, 170  
Were the friends of Hiawatha,  
Chibiabos, the musician,  
And the very strong man, Kwasind.  
Long they lived in peace together,  
Spake with naked hearts together,  
Pondering much and much contriving  
How the tribes of men might prosper.

## VII

## HIAWATHA'S SAILING

'GIVE me of your bark, O Birch-tree !  
Of your yellow bark, O Birch-tree !  
Growing by the rushing river,  
Tall and stately in the valley !  
I a light canoe will build me,  
Build a swift Cheemaun for sailing,  
That shall float upon the river,  
Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,  
Like a yellow water-lily !

'Lay aside your cloak, O Birch-tree ! 10  
Lay aside your white-skin wrapper,  
For the Summer-time is coming,  
And the sun is warm in heaven,  
And you need no white-skin wrapper !'

Thus aloud cried Hiawatha  
In the solitary forest,  
By the rushing Taquamenaw,  
When the birds were singing gayly,  
In the Moon of Leaves were singing,  
And the sun, from sleep awaking, 20  
Started up and said, 'Behold me !  
Gheezis, the great Sun, behold me !'

And the tree with all its branches  
Rustled in the breeze of morning,  
Saying, with a sigh of patience,  
'Take my cloak, O Hiawatha !'

With his knife the tree he girdled  
Just beneath its lowest branches,  
Just above the roots, he cut it,  
Till the sap came oozing outward; 30  
Down the trunk, from top to bottom,  
Sheer he cleft the bark asunder,  
With a wooden wedge he raised it,  
Stripped it from the trunk unbroken.

'Give me of your boughs, O Cedar !  
Of your strong and pliant branches,  
My canoe to make more steady,  
Make more strong and firm beneath me !'

Through the summit of the Cedar  
Went a sound, a cry of horror, 40  
Went a murmur of resistance;  
But it whispered, bending downward,  
'Take my boughs, O Hiawatha !'

Down he hewed the boughs of cedar,  
Shaped them straightway to a frame-work,  
Like two bows he formed and shaped them,  
Like two bended bows together.

'Give me of your roots, O Tamarack !  
Of your fibrous roots, O Larch-tree ! 50  
My canoe to bind together,  
So to bind the ends together

That the water may not enter,  
That the river may not wet me !'

And the Larch, with all its fibres,  
Shivered in the air of morning,  
Touched his forehead with its tassels,  
Said, with one long sigh of sorrow,  
'Take them all, O Hiawatha !'

From the earth he tore the fibres,  
Tore the tough roots of the Larch-tree, 60  
Closely sewed the bark together,  
Bound it closely to the frame-work.

'Give me of your balm, O Fir-tree !  
Of your balsam and your resin,  
So to close the seams together  
That the water may not enter,  
That the river may not wet me !'

And the Fir-tree, tall and sombre,  
Sobbed through all its robes of darkness,  
Rattled like a shore with pebbles, 70  
Answered wailing, answered weeping,  
'Take my balm, O Hiawatha !'

And he took the tears of balsam,  
Took the resin of the Fir-tree,  
Smeared therewith each seam and fissure,  
Made each crevice safe from water.

'Give me of your quills, O Hedgehog !  
All your quills, O Kagh, the Hedgehog !  
I will make a necklace of them,  
Make a girdle for my beauty, 80  
And two stars to deck her bosom !'

From a hollow tree the Hedgehog  
With his sleepy eyes looked at him;  
Shot his shining quills, like arrows,  
Saying with a drowsy murmur,  
Through the tangle of his whiskers, 90  
'Take my quills, O Hiawatha !'

From the ground the quills he gathered,  
All the little shining arrows,  
Stained them red and blue and yellow, 90  
With the juice of roots and berries;  
Into his canoe he wrought them,  
Round its waist a shining girdle,  
Round its bows a gleaming necklace,  
On its breast two stars resplendent.

Thus the Birch Canoe was builded  
In the valley, by the river,  
In the bosom of the forest;  
And the forest's life was in it,  
All its mystery and its magic, 100  
All the lightness of the birch-tree,  
All the toughness of the cedar,  
All the larch's supple sinews;  
And it floated on the river  
Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,  
Like a yellow water-lily.

Paddles none had Hiawatha,  
Paddles none he had or needed,  
For his thoughts as paddles served him,  
And his wishes served to guide him; 110  
Swift or slow at will he glided,  
Veered to right or left at pleasure.

Then he called aloud to Kwasind,  
To his friend, the strong man, Kwasind,  
Saying, 'Help me clear this river  
Of its sunken logs and sand-bars.'

Straight into the river Kwasind  
Plunged as if he were an otter,  
Dived as if he were a beaver,  
Stood up to his waist in water, 120  
To his arm-pits in the river,  
Swam and shouted in the river,  
Tugged at sunken logs and branches,  
With his hands he scooped the sand-bars,  
With his feet the ooze and tangle.

And thus sailed my Hiawatha  
Down the rushing Taquamenaw,  
Sailed through all its bends and windings,  
Sailed through all its deeps and shallows,  
While his friend, the strong man, Kwa-  
sind, 130

Swam the deeps, the shallows waded.

Up and down the river went they,  
In and out among its islands,  
Cleared its bed of root and sand-bar,  
Dragged the dead trees from its channel,  
Made its passage safe and certain,  
Made a pathway for the people,  
From its springs among the mountains,  
To the waters of Pauwating,  
To the bay of Taquamenaw. 140

## VIII

## HIAWATHA'S FISHING

FORTH upon the Gitche Gumee,  
On the shining Big-Sea-Water,  
With his fishing-line of cedar,  
Of the twisted bark of cedar,  
Forth to catch the sturgeon Nahma,  
Mishe-Nahma, King of Fishes,  
In his birch canoe exulting  
All alone went Hiawatha.

Through the clear, transparent water  
He could see the fishes swimming 150  
Far down in the depths below him;  
See the yellow perch, the Sahwa,  
Like a sunbeam in the water,  
See the Shawgashee, the craw-fish,

Like a spider on the bottom,  
On the white and sandy bottom.

At the stern sat Hiawatha,  
With his fishing-line of cedar;  
In his plumes the breeze of morning  
Played as in the hemlock branches; 20  
On the bows, with tail erected,  
Sat the squirrel, Adjidaumo;  
In his fur the breeze of morning  
Played as in the prairie grasses.

On the white sand of the bottom  
Lay the monster Mishe-Nahma,  
Lay the sturgeon, King of Fishes;  
Through his gills he breathed the water,  
With his fins he fanned and winnowed,  
With his tail he swept the sand-floor. 30

There he lay in all his armor;  
On each side a shield to guard him,  
Plates of bone upon his forehead,  
Down his sides and back and shoulders  
Plates of bone with spines projecting!  
Painted was he with his war-paints,  
Stripes of yellow, red, and azure,  
Spots of brown and spots of sable;  
And he lay there on the bottom,  
Fanning with his fins of purple, 40  
As above him Hiawatha

In his birch canoe came sailing,  
With his fishing-line of cedar.

'Take my bait,' cried Hiawatha,  
Down into the depths beneath him,  
'Take my bait, O Sturgeon, Nahma!  
Come up from below the water,  
Let us see which is the stronger!' 50  
And he dropped his line of cedar  
Through the clear, transparent water,  
Waited vainly for an answer,  
Long sat waiting for an answer,  
And repeating loud and louder,  
'Take my bait, O King of Fishes!'

Quiet lay the sturgeon, Nahma,  
Fanning slowly in the water,  
Looking up at Hiawatha,  
Listening to his call and clamor,  
His unnecessary tumult,  
Till he wearied of the shouting; 60  
And he said to the Kenozha,  
To the pike, the Maskenozha,  
'Take the bait of this rude fellow,  
Break the line of Hiawatha!'

In his fingers Hiawatha  
Felt the loose line jerk and tighten;  
As he drew it in, it tugged so  
That the birch canoe stood endwise,  
Like a birch log in the water,

With the squirrel, Adjidaumo,  
Perched and frisking on the summit.

Full of scorn was Hiawatha  
When he saw the fish rise upward,  
Saw the pike, the Maskenozha,  
Coming nearer, nearer to him,  
And he shouted through the water,  
'Esa! esa! shame upon you!  
You are but the pike, Kenozha,  
You are not the fish I wanted,  
You are not the King of Fishes!'

Reeling downward to the bottom  
Sank the pike in great confusion,  
And the mighty sturgeon, Nahma,  
Said to Ugudwash, the sun-fish,  
To the bream, with scales of crimson,  
'Take the bait of this great boaster,  
Break the line of Hiawatha!'

Slowly upward, wavering, gleaming,  
Rose the Ugudwash, the sun-fish,  
Seized the line of Hiawatha,  
Swung with all his weight upon it,  
Made a whirlpool in the water,  
Whirled the birch canoe in circles,  
Round and round in gurgling eddies,  
Till the circles in the water  
Reached the far-off sandy beaches,  
Till the water-flags and rushes  
Nodded on the distant margins.

But when Hiawatha saw him  
Slowly rising through the water,  
Lifting up his disk refulgent,  
Loud he shouted in derision,  
'Esa! esa! shame upon you!  
You are Ugudwash, the sun-fish,  
You are not the fish I wanted,  
You are not the King of Fishes!'

Slowly downward, wavering, gleaming,  
Sank the Ugudwash, the sun-fish,  
And again the sturgeon, Nahma,  
Heard the shout of Hiawatha,  
Heard his challenge of defiance,  
The unnecessary tumult,  
Ringing far across the water.

From the white sand of the bottom  
Up he rose with angry gesture,  
Quivering in each nerve and fibre,  
Clashing all his plates of armor,  
Gleaming bright with all his war-paint;  
In his wrath he darted upward,  
Flashing leaped into the sunshine,  
Opened his great jaws, and swallowed  
Both canoe and Hiawatha.

Down into that darksome cavern  
Plunged the headlong Hiawatha,

70

As a log on some black river  
Shoots and plunges down the rapids,  
Found himself in utter darkness,  
Groped about in helpless wonder,  
Till he felt a great heart beating,  
Throbbing in that utter darkness.

130

And he smote it in his anger,  
With his fist, the heart of Nahma,  
Felt the mighty King of Fishes  
Shudder through each nerve and fibre,  
Heard the water gurgle round him  
As he leaped and staggered through it,  
Sick at heart, and faint and weary.

Crosswise then did Hiawatha  
Drag his birch-canoe for safety,  
Lest from out the jaws of Nahma,  
In the turmoil and confusion,  
Forth he might be hurled and perish.  
And the squirrel, Adjidaumo,  
Frisked and chattered very gayly,  
Toiled and tugged with Hiawatha  
Till the labor was completed.

140

Then said Hiawatha to him,  
'O my little friend, the squirrel,  
Bravely have you toiled to help me;  
Take the thanks of Hiawatha,  
And the name which now he gives you;  
For hereafter and forever  
Boys shall call you Adjidaumo,  
Tail-in-air the boys shall call you!'

150

And again the sturgeon, Nahma,  
Gasped and quivered in the water,  
Then was still, and drifted landward  
Till he grated on the pebbles,  
Till the listening Hiawatha  
Heard him grate upon the margin,  
Felt him strand upon the pebbles,  
Knew that Nahma, King of Fishes,  
Lay there dead upon the margin.

160

Then he heard a clang and flapping,  
As of many wings assembling,  
Heard a screaming and confusion,  
As of birds of prey contending,  
Saw a gleam of light above him,  
Shining through the ribs of Nahma,  
Saw the glittering eyes of sea-gulls,  
Of Kayoshk, the sea-gulls, peering,  
Gazing at him through the opening,  
Heard them saying to each other,  
'T is our brother, Hiawatha!'

170

And he shouted from below them,  
Cried exulting from the caverns:  
'O ye sea-gulls! O my brothers!  
I have slain the sturgeon, Nahma;  
Make the rifts a little larger,

80

90

100

110

120

With your claws the openings widen, 180  
 Set me free from this dark prison,  
 And henceforward and forever  
 Men shall speak of your achievements,  
 Calling you Kayoshk, the sea-gulls,  
 Yes, Kayoshk, the Noble Scratchers !'

And the wild and clamorous sea-gulls  
 Toiled with beak and claws together,  
 Made the rifts and openings wider  
 In the mighty ribs of Nahma,  
 And from peril and from prison, 190  
 From the body of the sturgeon,  
 From the peril of the water,  
 They released my Hiawatha.

He was standing near his wigwam,  
 On the margin of the water,  
 And he called to old Nokomis,  
 Called and beckoned to Nokomis,  
 Pointed to the sturgeon, Nahma,  
 Lying lifeless on the pebbles,  
 With the sea-gulls feeding on him. 200

'I have slain the Mishe-Nahma,  
 Slain the King of Fishes !' said he;  
 'Look ! the sea-gulls feed upon him,  
 Yes, my friends Kayoshk, the sea-gulls;  
 Drive them not away, Nokomis,  
 They have saved me from great peril  
 In the body of the sturgeon,  
 Wait until their meal is ended,  
 Till their craws are full with feasting,  
 Till they homeward fly, at sunset, 210  
 To their nests among the marshes;  
 Then bring all your pots and kettles,  
 And make oil for us in Winter.'

And she waited till the sun set,  
 Till the pallid moon, the Night-sun,  
 Rose above the tranquil water,  
 Till Kayoshk, the sated sea-gulls,  
 From their banquet rose with clamor,  
 And across the fiery sunset  
 Winged their way to far-off islands, 220  
 To their nests among the rushes.

To his sleep went Hiawatha,  
 And Nokomis to her labor,  
 Toiling patient in the moonlight,  
 Till the sun and moon changed places,  
 Till the sky was red with sunrise,  
 And Kayoshk, the hungry sea-gulls,  
 Came back from the reedy islands,  
 Clamorous for their morning banquet.

Three whole days and nights alternate 230  
 Old Nokomis and the sea-gulls  
 Stripped the oily flesh of Nahma,  
 Till the waves washed through the rib-  
 bones,

Till the sea-gulls came no longer,  
 And upon the sands lay nothing  
 But the skeleton of Nahma.

## IX

## HIAWATHA AND THE PEARL-FEATHER

ON the shores of Gitche Gumees,  
 Of the shining Big-Sea-Water,  
 Stood Nokomis, the old woman,  
 Pointing with her finger westward,  
 O'er the water pointing westward,  
 To the purple clouds of sunset.

Fiercely the red sun descending  
 Burned his way along the heavens,  
 Set the sky on fire behind him,  
 As war-parties, when retreating, 10  
 Burn the prairies on their war-trail;  
 And the moon, the Night-sun, eastward,  
 Suddenly starting from his ambush,  
 Followed fast those bloody footprints,  
 Followed in that fiery war-trail,  
 With its glare upon his features.

And Nokomis, the old woman,  
 Pointing with her finger westward,  
 Spake these words to Hiawatha:  
 'Yonder dwells the great Pearl-Feather, 20  
 Megissogwon, the Magician,  
 Manito of Wealth and Wampum,  
 Guarded by his fiery serpents,  
 Guarded by the black pitch-water.  
 You can see his fiery serpents,  
 The Kenabeek, the great serpents,  
 Coiling, playing in the water;  
 You can see the black pitch-water  
 Stretching far away beyond them,  
 To the purple clouds of sunset ! 30

'He it was who slew my father,  
 By his wicked wiles and cunning,  
 When he from the moon descended,  
 When he came on earth to seek me.  
 He, the mightiest of Magicians,  
 Sends the fever from the marshes,  
 Sends the pestilential vapors,  
 Sends the poisonous exhalations,  
 Sends the white fog from the fen-lands,  
 Sends disease and death among us ! 40

'Take your bow, O Hiawatha,  
 Take your arrows, jasper-headed,  
 Take your war-club, Puggawaugun,  
 And your mittens, Minjekahwun,  
 And your birch-canoe for sailing,  
 And the oil of Mishe-Nahma,  
 So to smear its sides, that swiftly



You may pass the black pitch-water;  
Slay this merciless magician,  
Save the people from the fever  
That he breathes across the fen-lands,  
And avenge my father's murder !'

Straightway then my Hiawatha  
Armed himself with all his war-gear,  
Launched his birch-canoe for sailing;  
With his palm its sides he patted,  
Said with glee, 'Cheemaun, my darling,  
O my Birch-canoe ! leap forward,  
Where you see the fiery serpents,  
Where you see the black pitch-water !'

Forward leaped Cheemaun exulting,  
And the noble Hiawatha  
Sang his war-song wild and woful,  
And above him the war-eagle,  
The Keneu, the great war-eagle,  
Master of all fowls with feathers,  
Screamed and hurtled through the heavens.

Soon he reached the fiery serpents,  
The Kenabeek, the great serpents,  
Lying huge upon the water,  
Sparkling, rippling in the water,  
Lying coiled across the passage,  
With their blazing crests uplifted,  
Breathing fiery fogs and vapors,  
So that none could pass beyond them.

But the fearless Hiawatha  
Cried aloud, and spake in this wise,  
'Let me pass my way, Kenabeek,  
Let me go upon my journey !'  
And they answered, hissing fiercely,  
With their fiery breath made answer:  
'Back, go back ! O Shaugodaya !  
Back to old Nokomis, Faint-heart !'

Then the angry Hiawatha  
Raised his mighty bow of ash-tree,  
Seized his arrows, jasper-headed,  
Shot them fast among the serpents;  
Every twanging of the bow-string  
Was a war-cry and a death-cry,  
Every whizzing of an arrow  
Was a death-song of Kenabeek.

Weltering in the bloody water,  
Dead lay all the fiery serpents,  
And among them Hiawatha  
Harmless sailed, and cried exulting:  
'Onward, O Cheemaun, my darling !  
Onward to the black pitch-water !'

Then he took the oil of Nahma,  
And the bows and sides anointed,  
Smeared them well with oil, that swiftly  
He might pass the black pitch-water.

All night long he sailed upon it,

Sailed upon that sluggish water,  
Covered with its mould of ages,  
Black with rotting water-rushes,  
Rank with flags and leaves of lilies,  
Stagnant, lifeless, dreary, dismal,  
Lighted by the shimmering moonlight,  
And by will-o'-the-wisps illumined,  
Fires by ghosts of dead men kindled,  
In their weary night-encampments.

All the air was white with moonlight,  
All the water black with shadow,  
And around him the Suggema,  
The mosquito, sang his war-song,  
And the fire-flies, Wah-wah-taysee,  
Waved their torches to mislead him;  
And the bull-frog, the Dahinda,  
Thrust his head into the moonlight,  
Fixed his yellow eyes upon him,  
Sobbed and sank beneath the surface;  
And anon a thousand whistles,  
Answered over all the fen-lands,  
And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
Far off on the reedy margin,  
Heralded the hero's coming.

Westward thus fared Hiawatha,  
Toward the realm of Megissogwon,  
Toward the land of the Pearl-Feather,  
Till the level moon stared at him,  
In his face stared pale and haggard,  
Till the sun was hot behind him,  
Till it burned upon his shoulders,  
And before him on the upland  
He could see the Shining Wigwam  
Of the Manito of Wampum,  
Of the mightiest of Magicians.

Then once more Cheemaun he patted,  
To his birch-canoe said, 'Onward !'  
And it stirred in all its fibres,  
And with one great bound of triumph  
Leaped across the water-lilies,  
Leaped through tangled flags and rushes,  
And upon the beach beyond them  
Dry-shod landed Hiawatha.

Straight he took his bow of ash-tree,  
On the sand one end he rested,  
With his knee he pressed the middle,  
Stretched the faithful bow-string tighter,  
Took an arrow, jasper-headed,  
Shot it at the Shining Wigwam,  
Sent it singing as a herald,  
As a bearer of his message,  
Of his challenge loud and lofty:  
'Come forth from your lodge, Pearl-Feather !  
Hiawatha waits your coming !'



Straightway from the Shining Wigwam  
 Came the mighty Megissogwon,  
 Tall of stature, broad of shoulder,  
 Dark and terrible in aspect, 160  
 Clad from head to foot in wampum,  
 Armed with all his warlike weapons,  
 Painted like the sky of morning,  
 Streaked with crimson, blue, and yellow,

Crested with great eagle-feathers,  
 Streaming upward, streaming outward.

'Well I know you, Hiawatha!'

Cried he in a voice of thunder,  
 In a tone of loud derision.

'Hasten back, O Shaugodaya!'

Hasten back among the women, 170  
 Back to old Nokomis, Faint-heart!  
 I will slay you as you stand there,  
 As of old I slew her father!'

But my Hiawatha answered,  
 Nothing daunted, fearing nothing:  
 'Big words do not smite like war-clubs,  
 Boastful breath is not a bow-string,  
 Taunts are not so sharp as arrows,  
 Deeds are better things than words are, 180  
 Actions mightier than boastings!'

Then began the greatest battle  
 That the sun had ever looked on,  
 That the war-birds ever witnessed.  
 All a summer's day it lasted,  
 From the sunrise to the sunset;  
 For the shafts of Hiawatha  
 Harmless hit the shirt of wampum,  
 Harmless fell the blows he dealt it  
 With his mittens, Minjekahwun, 190  
 Harmless fell the heavy war-club;  
 It could dash the rocks asunder,  
 But it could not break the meshes  
 Of that magic shirt of wampum.

Till at sunset Hiawatha,  
 Leaning on his bow of ash-tree,  
 Wounded, weary, and desponding,  
 With his mighty war-club broken,  
 With his mittens torn and tattered, 200  
 And three useless arrows only,  
 Paused to rest beneath a pine-tree,  
 From whose branches trailed the mosses,  
 And whose trunk was coated over  
 With the Dead-man's Moccasin-leather,  
 With the fungus white and yellow.

Suddenly from the boughs above him  
 Sang the Mama, the woodpecker:

'Aim your arrows, Hiawatha,  
 At the head of Megissogwon,  
 Strike the tuft of hair upon it, 210

At their roots the long black tresses;  
 There alone can he be wounded!'

Winged with feathers, tipped with jasper,  
 Swift flew Hiawatha's arrow,  
 Just as Megissogwon, stooping,  
 Raised a heavy stone to throw it.  
 Full upon the crown it struck him,  
 At the roots of his long tresses,  
 And he reeled and staggered forward,  
 Plunging like a wounded bison, 220  
 Yes, like Pezhekee, the bison,  
 When the snow is on the prairie.

Swifter flew the second arrow,  
 In the pathway of the other,  
 Piercing deeper than the other,  
 Wounding sorer than the other;  
 And the knees of Megissogwon  
 Shook like windy reeds beneath him,  
 Bent and trembled like the rushes.

But the third and latest arrow 230  
 Swiftest flew, and wounded sorest,  
 And the mighty Megissogwon  
 Saw the fiery eyes of Pauguk,  
 Saw the eyes of Death glare at him,  
 Heard his voice call in the darkness;  
 At the feet of Hiawatha  
 Lifeless lay the great Pearl-Feather,  
 Lay the mightiest of Magicians.

Then the grateful Hiawatha  
 Called the Mama, the woodpecker, 240  
 From his perch among the branches  
 Of the melancholy pine-tree,  
 And, in honor of his service,  
 Stained with blood the tuft of feathers  
 On the little head of Mama;  
 Even to this day he wears it,  
 Wears the tuft of crimson feathers,  
 As a symbol of his service.

Then he stripped the shirt of wampum  
 From the back of Megissogwon, 250  
 As a trophy of the battle,  
 As a signal of his conquest.  
 On the shore he left the body,  
 Half on land and half in water,  
 In the sand his feet were buried,  
 And his face was in the water.  
 And above him, wheeled and clamored  
 The Keneu, the great war-eagle,  
 Sailing round in narrower circles,  
 Hovering nearer, nearer, nearer. 260

From the wigwam Hiawatha  
 Bore the wealth of Megissogwon,  
 All his wealth of skins and wampum,  
 Furs of bison and of beaver,  
 Furs of sable and of ermine,

Wampum belts and strings and pouches,  
Quivers wrought with beads of wampum,  
Filled with arrows, silver-headed.

Homeward then he sailed exulting, 269  
Homeward through the black pitch-water,  
Homeward through the weltering serpents  
With the trophies of the battle,  
With a shout and song of triumph.

On the shore stood old Nokomis,  
On the shore stood Chibiabos,  
And the very strong man, Kwasind,  
Waiting for the hero's coming,  
Listening to his songs of triumph.  
And the people of the village  
Welcomed him with songs and dances, 280  
Made a joyous feast, and shouted:  
'Honor be to Hiawatha !

He has slain the great Pearl-Feather,  
Slain the mightiest of Magicians,  
Him, who sent the fiery fever,  
Sent the white fog from the fen-lands,  
Sent disease and death among us !'

Ever dear to Hiawatha  
Was the memory of Mama !  
And in token of his friendship, 290  
As a mark of his remembrance,  
He adorned and decked his pipe-stem  
With the crimson tuft of feathers,  
With the blood-red crest of Mama.  
But the wealth of Megissogwon,  
All the trophies of the battle,  
He divided with his people,  
Shared it equally among them.

## X

### HIAWATHA'S WOOING

'As unto the bow the cord is,  
So unto the man is woman;  
Though she bends him, she obeys him,  
Though she draws him, yet she follows;  
Useless each without the other !'

Thus the youthful Hiawatha  
Said within himself and pondered,  
Much perplexed by various feelings,  
Listless, longing, hoping, fearing, 30  
Dreaming still of Minnehaha,  
Of the lovely Laughing Water,  
In the land of the Dacotahs.

'Wed a maiden of your people,'  
Warning said the old Nokomis;  
'Go not eastward, go not westward,  
For a stranger, whom we know not !

Like a fire upon the hearth-stone  
Is a neighbor's homely daughter,  
Like the starlight or the moonlight  
Is the handsomest of strangers !'

Thus dissuading spake Nokomis,  
And my Hiawatha answered  
Only this: 'Dear old Nokomis,  
Very pleasant is the firelight,  
But I like the starlight better,  
Better do I like the moonlight !'

Gravely then said old Nokomis:  
'Bring not here an idle maiden,  
Bring not here a useless woman,  
Hands unskilful, feet unwilling; 35  
Bring a wife with nimble fingers,  
Heart and hand that move together,  
Feet that run on willing errands !'

Smiling answered Hiawatha:  
'In the land of the Dacotahs  
Lives the Arrow-maker's daughter,  
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,  
Handsomest of all the women.  
I will bring her to your wigwam,  
She shall run upon your errands, 40  
Be your starlight, moonlight, firelight,  
Be the sunlight of my people !'

Still dissuading said Nokomis:  
'Bring not to my lodge a stranger  
From the land of the Dacotahs !  
Very fierce are the Dacotahs,  
Often is there war between us,  
There are feuds yet unforgotten,  
Wounds that ache and still may open !'

Laughing answered Hiawatha: 50  
'For that reason, if no other,  
Would I wed the fair Dacotah,  
That our tribes might be united,  
That old feuds might be forgotten,  
And old wounds be healed forever !'

Thus departed Hiawatha  
To the land of the Dacotahs,  
To the land of handsome women;  
Striding over moor and meadow,  
Through interminable forests, 60  
Through uninterrupted silence.

With his moccasins of magic,  
At each stride a mile he measured;  
Yet the way seemed long before him,  
And his heart outran his footsteps;  
And he journeyed without resting,  
Till he heard the cataract's laughter,  
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha  
Calling to him through the silence.  
'Pleasant is the sound !' he murmured, 70  
'Pleasant is the voice that calls me !'

On the outskirts of the forests,  
 'Twixt the shadow and the sunshine,  
 Herds of fallow deer were feeding,  
 But they saw not Hiawatha;  
 To his bow he whispered, 'Fail not !'  
 To his arrow whispered, 'Swerve not !'  
 Sent it singing on its errand,  
 To the red heart of the roebuck;  
 Threw the deer across his shoulder, 80  
 And sped forward without pausing.

At the doorway of his wigwam  
 Sat the ancient Arrow-maker,  
 In the land of the Dacotahs,  
 Making arrow-heads of jasper,  
 Arrow-heads of chalcedony.  
 At his side, in all her beauty,  
 Sat the lovely Minnehaha,  
 Sat his daughter, Laughing Water,  
 Plaiting mats of flags and rushes; 90  
 Of the past the old man's thoughts were,  
 And the maiden's of the future.

He was thinking, as he sat there,  
 Of the days when with such arrows  
 He had struck the deer and bison,  
 On the Muskoday, the meadow;  
 Shot the wild goose, flying southward,  
 On the wing, the clamorous Wawa;  
 Thinking of the great war-parties,  
 How they came to buy his arrows, 100  
 Could not fight without his arrows.

Ah, no more such noble warriors  
 Could be found on earth as they were !  
 Now the men were all like women,  
 Only used their tongues for weapons !

She was thinking of a hunter,  
 From another tribe and country,  
 Young and tall and very handsome,  
 Who one morning, in the Spring-time,  
 Came to buy her father's arrows, 110  
 Sat and rested in the wigwam,  
 Lingered long about the doorway,  
 Looking back as he departed.  
 She had heard her father praise him,  
 Praise his courage and his wisdom;  
 Would he come again for arrows  
 To the Falls of Minnehaha ?  
 On the mat her hands lay idle,  
 And her eyes were very dreamy.

Through their thoughts they heard a foot-  
 step, 120  
 Heard a rustling in the branches,  
 And with glowing cheek and forehead,  
 With the deer upon his shoulders,  
 Suddenly from out the woodlands  
 Hiawatha stood before them.

Straight the ancient Arrow-maker  
 Looked up gravely from his labor,  
 Laid aside the unfinished arrow,  
 Bade him enter at the doorway,  
 Saying, as he rose to meet him, 130  
 'Hiawatha, you are welcome !'

At the feet of Laughing Water  
 Hiawatha laid his burden,  
 Threw the red deer from his shoulders;  
 And the maiden looked up at him,  
 Looked up from her mat of rushes,  
 Said with gentle look and accent,  
 'You are welcome, Hiawatha !'

Very spacious was the wigwam,  
 Made of deer-skins dressed and whitened, 140  
 With the Gods of the Dacotahs  
 Drawn and painted on its curtains,  
 And so tall the doorway, hardly  
 Hiawatha stooped to enter,  
 Hardly touched his eagle-feathers  
 As he entered at the doorway.

Then uprose the Laughing Water,  
 From the ground fair Minnehaha,  
 Laid aside her mat unfinished,  
 Brought forth food and set before them, 150  
 Water brought them from the brooklet,  
 Gave them food in earthen vessels,  
 Gave them drink in bowls of bass-wood,  
 Listened while the guest was speaking,  
 Listened while her father answered,  
 But not once her lips she opened,  
 Not a single word she uttered.

Yes, as in a dream she listened  
 To the words of Hiawatha,  
 As he talked of old Nokomis, 160  
 Who had nursed him in his childhood,  
 As he told of his companions,  
 Chibiabos, the musician,  
 And the very strong man, Kwasind,  
 And of happiness and plenty  
 In the land of the Ojibways,  
 In the pleasant land and peaceful.

'After many years of warfare,  
 Many years of strife and bloodshed,  
 There is peace between the Ojibways 170  
 And the tribe of the Dacotahs.'

Thus continued Hiawatha,  
 And then added, speaking slowly,  
 'That this peace may last forever,  
 And our hands be clasped more closely,  
 And our hearts be more united,  
 Give me as my wife this maiden,  
 Minnehaha, Laughing Water,  
 Loveliest of Dacotah Women !'

And the ancient Arrow-maker 180

Paused a moment ere he answered,  
Smoked a little while in silence,  
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,  
Fondly looked at Laughing Water,  
And made answer very gravely:

'Yes, if Minnehaha wishes;  
Let your heart speak, Minnehaha!'

And the lovely Laughing Water  
Seemed more lovely as she stood there,  
Neither willing nor reluctant,

190

As she went to Hiawatha,  
Softly took the seat beside him,  
While she said, and blushed to say it,  
'I will follow you, my husband!'

This was Hiawatha's wooing!  
Thus it was he won the daughter  
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,  
In the land of the Dakotahs!

From the wigwam he departed,  
Leading with him Laughing Water;  
Hand in hand they went together,  
Through the woodland and the meadow,  
Left the old man standing lonely

200

At the doorway of his wigwam,  
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha  
Calling to them from the distance,  
Crying to them from afar off,  
'Fare thee well, O Minnehaha!'

And the ancient Arrow-maker  
Turned again unto his labor,  
Sat down by his sunny doorway,  
Murmuring to himself, and saying:  
'Thus it is our daughters leave us,  
Those we love, and those who love us!  
Just when they have learned to help us,  
When we are old and lean upon them,  
Comes a youth with flaunting feathers,  
With his flute of reeds, a stranger  
Wanders piping through the village,  
Beckons to the fairest maiden,  
And she follows where he leads her,  
Leaving all things for the stranger!'

210

220

Pleasant was the journey homeward,  
Through interminable forests,  
Over meadow, over mountain,  
Over river, hill, and hollow.  
Short it seemed to Hiawatha,  
Though they journeyed very slowly,  
Though his pace he checked and slackened  
To the steps of Laughing Water.

230

Over wide and rushing rivers  
In his arms he bore the maiden;  
Light he thought her as a feather,  
As the plume upon his head-gear;  
Cleared the tangled pathway for her,

Bent aside the swaying branches,  
Made at night a lodge of branches,  
And a bed with boughs of hemlock,  
And a fire before the doorway  
With the dry cones of the pine-tree.

240

All the travelling winds went with them,  
O'er the meadows, through the forest;  
All the stars of night looked at them,  
Watched with sleepless eyes their slumber;  
From his ambush in the oak-tree  
Peeped the squirrel, Adjidaumo,  
Watched with eager eyes the lovers;  
And the rabbit, the Wabasso,  
Scampered from the path before them,  
Peering, peeping from his burrow,  
Sat erect upon his haunches,  
Watched with curious eyes the lovers.

250

Pleasant was the journey homeward!  
All the birds sang loud and sweetly  
Songs of happiness and heart's-ease;  
Sang the bluebird, the Owaissa,  
'Happy are you, Hiawatha,  
Having such a wife to love you!'  
Sang the robin, the Opechee,  
'Happy are you, Laughing Water,  
Having such a noble husband!'

260

From the sky the sun benignant  
Looked upon them through the branches,  
Saying to them, 'O my children,  
Love is sunshine, hate is shadow,  
Life is checkered shade and sunshine,  
Rule by love, O Hiawatha!'

From the sky the moon looked at them,  
Filled the lodge with mystic splendors,  
Whispered to them, 'O my children,  
Day is restless, night is quiet,  
Man imperious, woman feeble;  
Half is mine, although I follow;  
Rule by patience, Laughing Water!'

270

Thus it was they journeyed homeward;  
Thus it was that Hiawatha  
To the lodge of old Nokomis  
Brought the moonlight, starlight, firelight,  
Brought the sunshine of his people,  
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,  
Handsome of all the women  
In the land of the Dakotahs,  
In the land of handsome women.

280

## XI

### HIAWATHA'S WEDDING-FEAST

You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
How the handsome Yenadizze

Danced at Hiawatha's wedding;  
 How the gentle Chibiabos,  
 He the sweetest of musicians,  
 Sang his songs of love and longing;  
 How Iagoo, the great boaster,  
 He the marvellous story-teller,  
 Told his tales of strange adventure,  
 That the feast might be more joyous,  
 That the time might pass more gayly,  
 And the guests be more contented.

Sumptuous was the feast Nokomis  
 Made at Hiawatha's wedding;  
 All the bowls were made of bass-wood,  
 White and polished very smoothly,  
 All the spoons of horn of bison,  
 Black and polished very smoothly.

She had sent through all the village  
 Messengers with wands of willow,  
 As a sign of invitation,  
 As a token of the feasting;  
 And the wedding guests assembled,  
 Clad in all their richest raiment,  
 Robes of fur and belts of wampum,  
 Splendid with their paint and plumage,  
 Beautiful with beads and tassels.

First they ate the sturgeon, Nahma,  
 And the pike, the Maskenozha,  
 Caught and cooked by old Nokomis;  
 Then on pemican they feasted,  
 Pemican and buffalo marrow,  
 Haunch of deer and hump of bison,  
 Yellow cakes of the Mondamin,  
 And the wild rice of the river.

But the gracious Hiawatha,  
 And the lovely Laughing Water,  
 And the careful old Nokomis,  
 Tasted not the food before them,  
 Only waited on the others,  
 Only served their guests in silence.

And when all the guests had finished,  
 Old Nokomis, brisk and busy,  
 From an ample pouch of otter,  
 Filled the red-stone pipes for smoking  
 With tobacco from the South-land,  
 Mixed with bark of the red willow,  
 And with herbs and leaves of fragrance.

Then she said, 'O Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Dance for us your merry dances,  
 Dance the Beggar's Dance to please us,  
 That the feast may be more joyous,  
 That the time may pass more gayly,  
 And our guests be more contented!'

Then the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 He the idle Yenadizze,  
 He the merry mischief-maker,

Whom the people called the Storm-Fool,  
 Rose among the guests assembled.

Skilled was he in sports and pastimes,  
 In the merry dance of snow-shoes,  
 In the play of quoits and ball-play;  
 Skilled was he in games of hazard,  
 In all games of skill and hazard,  
 Pugasaing, the Bowl and Counters,  
 Kuntassoo, the Game of Plum-stones.  
 Though the warriors called him Faint-  
 Heart,

Called him coward, Shaugodaya,  
 Idler, gambler, Yenadizze,  
 Little heeded he their jesting,  
 Little cared he for their insults,  
 For the women and the maidens  
 Loved the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis.

He was dressed in shirt of doeskin,  
 White and soft, and fringed with ermine,  
 All inwrought with beads of wampum;  
 He was dressed in deer-skin leggings,  
 Fringed with hedgehog quills and ermine,  
 And in moccasins of buck-skin,  
 Thick with quills and beads embroidered.  
 On his head were plumes of swan's down,  
 On his heels were tails of foxes,  
 In one hand a fan of feathers,  
 And a pipe was in the other.

Barred with streaks of red and yellow,  
 Streaks of blue and bright vermilion,  
 Shone the face of Pau-Puk-Keewis.  
 From his forehead fell his tresses,  
 Smooth, and parted like a woman's,  
 Shining bright with oil, and plaited,  
 Hung with braids of scented grasses,  
 As among the guests assembled,  
 To the sound of flutes and singing,  
 To the sound of drums and voices,  
 Rose the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 And began his mystic dances.

First he danced a solemn measure,  
 Very slow in step and gesture,  
 In and out among the pine-trees,  
 Through the shadows and the sunshine,  
 Treading softly like a panther.  
 Then more swiftly and still swifter,  
 Whirling, spinning round in circles,  
 Leaping o'er the guests assembled,  
 Eddying round and round the wigwam,  
 Till the leaves went whirling with him,  
 Till the dust and wind together  
 Swept in eddies round about him.

Then along the sandy margin  
 Of the lake, the Big-Sea-Water,  
 On he sped with frenzied gestures,



Stamped upon the sand, and tossed it  
Wildly in the air around him;  
Till the wind became a whirlwind,  
Till the sand was blown and sifted  
Like great snowdrifts o'er the landscape,  
Heaping all the shores with Sand Dunes,  
Sand Hills of the Nagow Wudjoo! <sup>1</sup>

Thus the merry Pau-Puk-Keewis  
Danced his Beggar's Dance to please  
them, 120

And, returning, sat down laughing  
There among the guests assembled,  
Sat and fanned himself serenely  
With his fan of turkey-feathers.

Then they said to Chibiabos,  
To the friend of Hiawatha,  
To the sweetest of all singers,  
To the best of all musicians,  
'Sing to us, O Chibiabos!  
Songs of love and songs of longing, 130  
That the feast may be more joyous,  
That the time may pass more gayly,  
And our guests be more contented!'

And the gentle Chibiabos  
Sang in accents sweet and tender,  
Sang in tones of deep emotion,  
Songs of love and songs of longing;  
Looking still at Hiawatha,  
Looking at fair Laughing Water,  
Sang he softly, sang in this wise: 140

'Onaway! Awake, beloved!  
Thou the wild-flower of the forest!  
Thou the wild-bird of the prairie!  
Thou with eyes so soft and fawn-like!

'If thou only lookest at me,  
I am happy, I am happy,  
As the lilies of the prairie,  
When they feel the dew upon them!

'Sweet thy breath is as the fragrance  
Of the wild-flowers in the morning, 150  
As their fragrance is at evening,  
In the Moon when leaves are falling.

'Does not all the blood within me  
Leap to meet thee, leap to meet thee,  
As the springs to meet the sunshine,  
In the Moon when nights are brightest?

'Onaway! my heart sings to thee,  
Sings with joy when thou art near me,  
As the sighing, singing branches  
In the pleasant Moon of Strawberries! 160

'When thou art not pleased, beloved,

Then my heart is sad and darkened,  
As the shining river darkens  
When the clouds drop shadows on it!

'When thou smilest, my beloved,  
Then my troubled heart is brightened,  
As in sunshine gleam the ripples  
That the cold wind makes in rivers.

'Smiles the earth, and smile the waters,  
Smile the cloudless skies above us, 175  
But I lose the way of smiling  
When thou art no longer near me!

'I myself, myself! behold me!  
Blood of my beating heart, behold me!  
Oh awake, awake, beloved!  
Onaway! awake, beloved! <sup>2</sup>

Thus the gentle Chibiabos  
Sang his song of love and longing;  
And Iagoo, the great boaster,  
He the marvellous story-teller, 180  
He the friend of old Nokomis,  
Jealous of the sweet musician,  
Jealous of the applause they gave him,  
Saw in all the eyes around him,  
Saw in all their looks and gestures,  
That the wedding guests assembled  
Longed to hear his pleasant stories,  
His immeasurable falsehoods.

Very boastful was Iagoo;  
Never heard he an adventure 190  
But himself had met a greater;  
Never any deed of daring  
But himself had done a bolder;  
Never any marvellous story  
But himself could tell a stranger.

Would you listen to his boasting,  
Would you only give him credence,  
No one ever shot an arrow  
Half so far and high as he had;  
Ever caught so many fishes, 200  
Ever killed so many reindeer,  
Ever trapped so many beaver!

None could run so fast as he could,  
None could dive so deep as he could,  
None could swim so far as he could,  
None had made so many journeys,  
None had seen so many wonders,  
As this wonderful Iagoo,  
As this marvellous story-teller!

Thus his name became a by-word 210  
And a jest among the people;  
And whene'er a boastful hunter  
Praised his own address too highly,  
Or a warrior, home returning,

<sup>1</sup> A description of the *Grand Sable*, or great sand-dunes of Lake Superior, is given in Foster and Whitney's *Report on the Geology of the Lake Superior Land District*, part II, p. 131. (LONGFELLOW.)

<sup>2</sup> The original of this song may be found in *Littell's Living Age*, vol. XXXV, p. 45. (LONGFELLOW.)

Talked too much of his achievements,  
All his hearers cried 'Iagoo !  
Here 's Iagoo come among us !'

He it was who carved the cradle  
Of the little Hiawatha,  
Carved its framework out of linden, 220  
Bound it strong with reindeer sinews ;  
He it was who taught him later  
How to make his bows and arrows,  
How to make the bows of ash-tree,  
And the arrows of the oak-tree.  
So among the guests assembled  
At my Hiawatha's wedding  
Sat Iagoo, old and ugly,  
Sat the marvellous story-teller.

And they said, 'O good Iagoo, 230  
Tell us now a tale of wonder,  
Tell us of some strange adventure,  
That the feast may be more joyous,  
That the time may pass more gayly,  
And our guests be more contented !'

And Iagoo answered straightway,  
'You shall hear a tale of wonder,  
You shall hear the strange adventures  
Of Osseo, the Magician,  
From the Evening Star descended.' 240

## XII

## THE SON OF THE EVENING STAR

CAN it be the sun descending  
O'er the level plain of water?  
Or the Red Swan floating, flying,  
Wounded by the magic arrow,  
Staining all the waves with crimson,  
With the crimson of its life-blood,  
Filling all the air with splendor,  
With the splendor of its plumage ?

Yes; it is the sun descending,  
Sinking down into the water; 10  
All the sky is stained with purple,  
All the water flushed with crimson !  
No; it is the Red Swan floating,  
Diving down beneath the water;  
To the sky its wings are lifted,  
With its blood the waves are reddened !

Over it the Star of Evening  
Melts and trembles through the purple,  
Hangs suspended in the twilight.  
No; it is a bead of wampum 20  
On the robes of the Great Spirit  
As he passes through the twilight,  
Walks in silence through the heavens.

This with joy beheld Iagoo  
And he said in haste: 'Behold it !  
See the sacred Star of Evening !  
You shall hear a tale of wonder,  
Hear the story of Osseo,  
Son of the Evening Star, Osseo !

'Once, in days no more remembered, 30  
Ages nearer the beginning,  
When the heavens were closer to us,  
And the Gods were more familiar,  
In the North-land lived a hunter,  
With ten young and comely daughters,  
Tall and lithe as wands of willow;  
Only Oweenee, the youngest,  
She the wilful and the wayward,  
She the silent, dreamy maiden,  
Was the fairest of the sisters. 40

'All these women married warriors,  
Married brave and haughty husbands;  
Only Oweenee, the youngest,  
Laughed and flouted all her lovers,  
All her young and handsome suitors,  
And then married old Osseo,  
Old Osseo, poor and ugly,  
Broken with age and weak with coughing,  
Always coughing like a squirrel.

'Ah, but beautiful within him 50  
Was the spirit of Osseo,  
From the Evening Star descended,  
Star of Evening, Star of Woman,  
Star of tenderness and passion !  
All its fire was in his bosom,  
All its beauty in his spirit,  
All its mystery in his being,  
All its splendor in his language !

'And her lovers, the rejected, 60  
Handsome men with belts of wampum,  
Handsome men with paint and feathers,  
Pointed at her in derision,  
Followed her with jest and laughter.  
But she said: "I care not for you,  
Care not for your belts of wampum,  
Care not for your paint and feathers,  
Care not for your jests and laughter;  
I am happy with Osseo !"

'Once to some great feast invited,  
Through the damp and dusk of evening, 70  
Walked together the ten sisters,  
Walked together with their husbands;  
Slowly followed old Osseo,  
With fair Oweenee beside him;  
All the others chatted gayly,  
These two only walked in silence.

'At the western sky Osseo  
Gazed intent, as if imploring,



Often stopped and gazed imploring  
 At the trembling Star of Evening,  
 At the tender Star of Woman;  
 And they heard him murmur softly,  
*"Ah, showain nemeshin, Nosa!*  
*Pity, pity me, my father!"*  
*"Listen!"* said the eldest sister,  
*"He is praying to his father!*  
*What a pity that the old man*  
*Does not stumble in the pathway,*  
*Does not break his neck by falling!"*  
 And they laughed till all the forest  
 Rang with their unseemly laughter.

'On their pathway through the wood-lands

Lay an oak, by storms uprooted,  
 Lay the great trunk of an oak-tree,  
 Buried half in leaves and mosses,  
 Mouldering, crumbling, huge and hollow.  
 And Osseo, when he saw it,  
 Gave a shout, a cry of anguish,  
 Leaped into its yawning cavern,  
 At one end went in an old man,  
 Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly;  
 From the other came a young man,  
 Tall and straight and strong and handsome.

'Thus Osseo was transfigured,  
 Thus restored to youth and beauty;  
 But, alas for good Osseo,  
 And for Oweenee, the faithful!  
 Strangely, too, was she transfigured.  
 Changed into a weak old woman,  
 With a staff she tottered onward,  
 Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly!  
 And the sisters and their husbands  
 Laughed until the echoing forest  
 Rang with their unseemly laughter.

'But Osseo turned not from her,  
 Walked with slower step beside her,  
 Took her hand, as brown and withered  
 As an oak-leaf is in Winter,  
 Called her sweetheart, Nenemoosha,  
 Soothed her with soft words of kindness,  
 Till they reached the lodge of feasting,  
 Till they sat down in the wigwam,  
 Sacred to the Star of Evening,  
 To the tender Star of Woman.

'Wrapt in visions, lost in dreaming,  
 At the banquet sat Osseo;  
 All were merry, all were happy,  
 All were joyous but Osseo.  
 Neither food nor drink he tasted,  
 Neither did he speak nor listen,  
 But as one bewildered sat he,  
 Looking dreamily and sadly,

First at Oweenee, then upward  
 At the gleaming sky above them.

'Then a voice was heard, a whisper,  
 Coming from the starry distance,  
 Coming from the empty vastness,  
 Low, and musical, and tender;  
 And the voice said: "O Osseo!  
 O my son, my best beloved!  
 Broken are the spells that bound you,  
 All the charms of the magicians,  
 All the magic powers of evil;  
 Come to me; ascend, Osseo!"

"Taste the food that stands before you:  
 It is blessed and enchanted,  
 It has magic virtues in it,  
 It will change you to a spirit.  
 All your bowls and all your kettles  
 Shall be wood and clay no longer;  
 But the bowls be changed to wampum,  
 And the kettles shall be silver;  
 They shall shine like shells of scarlet,  
 Like the fire shall gleam and glimmer.

"And the women shall no longer  
 Bear the dreary doom of labor,  
 But be changed to birds, and glisten  
 With the beauty of the starlight,  
 Painted with the dusky splendors  
 Of the skies and clouds of evening!"  
 'What Osseo heard as whispers,  
 What as words he comprehended,  
 Was but music to the others,  
 Music as of birds afar off,  
 Of the whippoorwill afar off,  
 Of the lonely Wawonaissa  
 Singing in the darksome forest.

'Then the lodge began to tremble,  
 Straight began to shake and tremble,  
 And they felt it rising, rising,  
 Slowly through the air ascending,  
 From the darkness of the tree-tops  
 Forth into the dewy starlight,  
 Till it passed the topmost branches;  
 And behold! the wooden dishes  
 All were changed to shells of scarlet!  
 And behold! the earthen kettles  
 All were changed to bowls of silver!  
 And the roof-poles of the wigwam  
 Were as glittering rods of silver,  
 And the roof of bark upon them  
 As the shining shards of beetles.

'Then Osseo gazed around him,  
 And he saw the nine fair sisters,  
 All the sisters and their husbands,  
 Changed to birds of various plumage.  
 Some were jays and some were magpies,

Others thrushes, others blackbirds;  
And they hopped, and sang, and twittered,  
Perked and fluttered all their feathers, 190  
Strutted in their shining plumage,  
And their tails like fans unfolded.

‘ Only Oweenee, the youngest,  
Was not changed, but sat in silence,  
Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly,  
Looking sadly at the others;  
Till Osseo, gazing upward,  
Gave another cry of anguish,  
Such a cry as he had uttered  
By the oak-tree in the forest. 200

‘ Then returned her youth and beauty,  
And her soiled and tattered garments  
Were transformed to robes of ermine,  
And her staff became a feather,  
Yes, a shining silver feather !

‘ And again the wigwam trembled,  
Swayed and rushed through airy currents,  
Through transparent cloud and vapor,  
And amid celestial splendors  
On the Evening Star alighted, 210  
As a snow-flake falls on snow-flake,  
As a leaf drops on a river,  
As the thistle-down on water.

‘ Forth with cheerful words of welcome  
Came the father of Osseo,  
He with radiant locks of silver,  
He with eyes serene and tender.  
And he said : “ My son, Osseo,  
Hang the cage of birds you bring there,  
Hang the cage with rods of silver, 220  
And the birds with glistening feathers,  
At the doorway of my wigwam.”

‘ At the door he hung the bird-cage,  
And they entered in and gladly  
Listened to Osseo’s father,  
Ruler of the Star of Evening,  
As he said : “ O my Osseo !  
I have had compassion on you,  
Given you back your youth and beauty,  
Into birds of various plumage 230  
Changed your sisters and their husbands;  
Changed them thus because they mocked  
you

In the figure of the old man,  
In that aspect sad and wrinkled,  
Could not see your heart of passion,  
Could not see your youth immortal;  
Only Oweenee, the faithful,  
Saw your naked heart and loved you.

“ In the lodge that glimmers yonder,  
In the little star that twinkles 240  
Through the vapors, on the left hand,

Lives the envious Evil Spirit,  
The Wabeno, the magician,  
Who transformed you to an old man.  
Take heed lest his beams fall on you,  
For the rays he darts around him  
Are the power of his enchantment,  
Are the arrows that he uses.”

‘ Many years, in peace and quiet,  
On the peaceful Star of Evening 250  
Dwelt Osseo with his father;  
Many years, in song and flutter,  
At the doorway of the wigwam,  
Hung the cage with rods of silver,  
And fair Oweenee, the faithful,  
Bore a son unto Osseo,  
With the beauty of his mother,  
With the courage of his father.

‘ And the boy grew up and prospered,  
And Osseo, to delight him, 260  
Made him little bows and arrows,  
Opened the great cage of silver,  
And let loose his aunts and uncles,  
All those birds with glossy feathers,  
For his little son to shoot at.

‘ Round and round they wheeled and  
darted,  
Filled the Evening Star with music,  
With their songs of joy and freedom;  
Filled the Evening Star with splendor,  
With the fluttering of their plumage; 270  
Till the boy, the little hunter,  
Bent his bow and shot an arrow,  
Shot a swift and fatal arrow,  
And a bird, with shining feathers,  
At his feet fell wounded sorely.

‘ But, O wondrous transformation !  
’T was no bird he saw before him,  
’T was a beautiful young woman,  
With the arrow in her bosom !

‘ When her blood fell on the planet, 280  
On the sacred Star of Evening,  
Broken was the spell of magic,  
Powerless was the strange enchantment,  
And the youth, the fearless bowman,  
Suddenly felt himself descending,  
Held by unseen hands, but sinking  
Downward through the empty spaces,  
Downward through the clouds and vapors,  
Till he rested on an island,  
On an island, green and grassy, 290  
Yonder in the Big-Sea-Water.

‘ After him he saw descending  
All the birds with shining feathers,  
Fluttering, falling, wafted downward,  
Like the painted leaves of Autumn;

And the lodge with poles of silver,  
 With its roof like wings of beetles,  
 Like the shining shards of beetles,  
 By the winds of heaven uplifted,  
 Slowly sank upon the island, 300  
 Bringing back the good Osseo,  
 Bringing Oweenee, the faithful.  
 'Then the birds, again transfigured,  
 Reassumed the shape of mortals,  
 Took their shape, but not their stature;  
 They remained as Little People,  
 Like the pygmies, the Puk-Wudjies,  
 And on pleasant nights of summer,  
 When the Evening Star was shining,  
 Hand in hand they danced together 310  
 On the island's craggy headlands,  
 On the sand-beach low and level.  
 'Still their glittering lodge is seen there,  
 On the tranquil Summer evenings,  
 And upon the shore the fisher  
 Sometimes hears their happy voices,  
 Sees them dancing in the starlight !'  
 When the story was completed,  
 When the wondrous tale was ended,  
 Looking round upon his listeners, 320  
 Solemnly Iagoo added:  
 'There are great men, I have known  
 such,  
 Whom their people understand not,  
 Whom they even make a jest of,  
 Scoff and jeer at in derision.  
 From the story of Osseo  
 Let us learn the fate of jesters !'  
 All the wedding guests delighted  
 Listened to the marvellous story, 330  
 Listened laughing and applauding,  
 And they whispered to each other:  
 'Does he mean himself, I wonder ?  
 And are we the aunts and uncles ?'  
 Then again sang Chibiabos,  
 Sang a song of love and longing,  
 In those accents sweet and tender,  
 In those tones of pensive sadness,  
 Sang a maiden's lamentation  
 For her lover, her Algonquin.  
 'When I think of my beloved, 340  
 Ah me ! think of my beloved,  
 When my heart is thinking of him,  
 O my sweetheart, my Algonquin !  
 'Ah me ! when I parted from him,  
 Round my neck he hung the wampum,  
 As a pledge, the snow-white wampum,  
 O my sweetheart, my Algonquin !  
 'I will go with you, he whispered,  
 Ah me ! to your native country;

Let me go with you, he whispered, 350  
 O my sweetheart, my Algonquin !  
 'Far away, away, I answered,  
 Very far away, I answered,  
 Ah me ! is my native country,  
 O my sweetheart, my Algonquin !  
 'When I looked back to behold him,  
 Where we parted, to behold him,  
 After me he still was gazing,  
 O my sweetheart, my Algonquin !  
 'By the tree he still was standing, 360  
 By the fallen tree was standing,  
 That had dropped into the water,  
 O my sweetheart, my Algonquin !  
 'When I think of my beloved,  
 Ah me ! think of my beloved,  
 When my heart is thinking of him,  
 O my sweetheart, my Algonquin !'<sup>1</sup>  
 Such was Hiawatha's Wedding,  
 Such the dance of Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Such the story of Iagoo, 370  
 Such the songs of Chibiabos;  
 Thus the wedding banquet ended,  
 And the wedding guests departed,  
 Leaving Hiawatha happy  
 With the night and Minnehaha.

## XIII

BLESSING THE CORNFIELDS<sup>2</sup>

SING, O Song of Hiawatha,  
 Of the happy days that followed,

<sup>1</sup> The original of this song may be found in *Oneida*, p. 15. (LONGFELLOW.)

<sup>2</sup> The Indians hold the maize, or Indian corn, in great veneration. 'They esteem it so important and divine a grain,' says Schoolcraft, 'that their story-tellers invented various tales, in which this idea is symbolized under the form of a special gift from the Great Spirit. The Odjibwa-Algonquins, who call it *Mon-damin*, that is, this Spirit's grain or berry, have a pretty story of the kind, in which the stalk in full tassel is represented as descending from the sky, under the guise of a handsome youth, in answer to the prayers of a young man at his fast of virility, or coming to manhood.'

'It is well known that corn-planting and corn-gathering, at least among all the still *uncolonised* tribes, are left entirely to the females and children, and a few superannuated old men. It is not generally known, perhaps, that this labor is not compulsory, and that it is assumed by the females as a just equivalent, in their view, for the onerous and continuous labor of the other sex, in providing meats, and skins for clothing, by the chase, and in defending their villages against their enemies, and keeping intruders off their territories. A good Indian housewife deems this a part of her prerogative, and prides herself to have a store of corn to exercise her hospitality, or duly honor her husband's hospitality in the entertainment of the lodge guests.' — *Oneida*, p. 82. (LONGFELLOW.)

In the land of the Ojibways,  
In the pleasant land and peaceful !  
Sing the mysteries of Mondamin,  
Sing the Blessing of the Cornfields !

Buried was the bloody hatchet,  
Buried was the dreadful war-club,  
Buried were all warlike weapons,  
And the war-cry was forgotten. 10  
There was peace among the nations;  
Unmolested roved the hunters,  
Built the birch canoe for sailing,  
Caught the fish in lake and river,  
Shot the deer and trapped the beaver;  
Unmolested worked the women,  
Made their sugar from the maple,  
Gathered wild rice in the meadows,  
Dressed the skins of deer and beaver.

All around the happy village 20  
Stood the maize-fields, green and shining,  
Waved the green plumes of Mondamin,  
Waved his soft and sunny tresses,  
Filling all the land with plenty.  
'T was the women who in spring-time  
Planted the broad fields and fruitful,  
Buried in the earth Mondamin;  
'T was the women who in Autumn  
Stripped the yellow husks of harvest,  
Stripped the garments from Mondamin, 30  
Even as Hiawatha taught them.

Once, when all the maize was planted,  
Hiawatha, wise and thoughtful,  
Spake and said to Minnehaha,  
To his wife, the Laughing Water:  
'You shall bless to-night the cornfields  
Draw a magic circle round them,  
To protect them from destruction,  
Blast of mildew, blight of insect,  
Wagemin, the thief of cornfields, 40  
Paimosaid, who steals the maize-ear !

'In the night, when all is silence,  
In the night, when all is darkness,  
When the Spirit of Sleep, Nepahwin,  
Shuts the doors of all the wigwams,  
So that not an ear can hear you,  
So that not an eye can see you,  
Rise up from your bed in silence,  
Lay aside your garments wholly,  
Walk around the fields you planted, 50  
Round the borders of the cornfields,  
Covered by your tresses only,  
Robed with darkness as a garment.

'Thus the fields shall be more fruitful,  
And the passing of your footsteps  
Draw a magic circle round them,  
So that neither blight nor mildew,

Neither burrowing worm nor insect,  
Shall pass o'er the magic circle;  
Not the dragon-fly, Kwo-ne-she, 60  
Nor the spider, Subbekashe,  
Nor the grasshopper, Pah-puk-keena,  
Nor the mighty caterpillar,  
Way-muk-kwana, with the bear-skin,  
King of all the caterpillars !' 1

On the tree-tops near the cornfields  
Sat the hungry crows and ravens,  
Kahgahgee, the King of Ravens,  
With his band of black marauders.  
And they laughed at Hiawatha, 70  
Till the tree-tops shook with laughter,  
With their melancholy laughter,  
At the words of Hiawatha.  
'Hear him !' said they; 'hear the Wise  
Man,

Hear the plots of Hiawatha !'  
When the noiseless night descended  
Broad and dark o'er field and forest,  
When the mournful Wawonaissa  
Sorrowing sang among the hemlocks,  
And the Spirit of Sleep, Nepahwin, 80  
Shut the doors of all the wigwams,  
From her bed rose Laughing Water,  
Laid aside her garments wholly,  
And with darkness clothed and guarded,  
Unashamed and unaffrighted,  
Walked securely round the cornfields.  
Drew the sacred, magic circle  
Of her footprints round the cornfields.

No one but the Midnight only  
Saw her beauty in the darkness, 90  
No one but the Wawonaissa  
Heard the panting of her bosom;  
Guskewau, the darkness, wrapped her  
Closely in his sacred mantle,  
So that none might see her beauty,  
So that none might boast, 'I saw her !'

On the morrow, as the day dawned,  
Kahgahgee, the King of Ravens,  
Gathered all his black marauders,

<sup>1</sup> 'A singular proof of this belief, in both sexes, of the mysterious influence of the steps of a woman on the vegetable and insect creation, is found in an ancient custom, which was related to me, respecting corn-planting. It was the practice of the hunter's wife, when the field of corn had been planted, to choose the first dark or overclouded evening to perform a secret circuit, *sans habillement*, around the field. For this purpose she slipped out of the lodge in the evening, unobserved, to some obscure nook, where she completely disrobed. Then, taking her matchecota, or principal garment, in one hand, she dragged it around the field. This was thought to insure a prolific crop, and to prevent the assaults of insects and worms upon the grain. It was supposed they could not creep over the charmed line.' — *Oneota*, p. 83. (LONGFELLOW.)

Crows and blackbirds, jays and ravens, 100  
 Clamorous on the dusky tree-tops,  
 And descended, fast and fearless,  
 On the fields of Hiawatha,  
 On the grave of the Mondamin.

'We will drag Mondamin,' said they,  
 'From the grave where he is buried,  
 Spite of all the magic circles  
 Laughing Water draws around it,  
 Spite of all the sacred footprints  
 Minnehaha stamps upon it!' 110

But the wary Hiawatha,  
 Ever thoughtful, careful, watchful,  
 Had o'erheard the scornful laughter  
 When they mocked him from the tree-tops.  
 'Kaw!' he said, 'my friends the ravens!  
 Kahgahgee, my King of Ravens!  
 I will teach you all a lesson  
 That shall not be soon forgotten!'

He had risen before the daybreak,  
 He had spread o'er all the cornfields 120  
 Snares to catch the black marauders,  
 And was lying now in ambush  
 In the neighboring grove of pine-trees,  
 Waiting for the crows and blackbirds,  
 Waiting for the jays and ravens.

Soon they came with caw and clamor,  
 Rush of wings and cry of voices,  
 To their work of devastation,  
 Settling down upon the cornfields,  
 Delving deep with beak and talon, 130  
 For the body of Mondamin.  
 And with all their craft and cunning,  
 All their skill in wiles of warfare,  
 They perceived no danger near them,  
 Till their claws became entangled,  
 Till they found themselves imprisoned  
 In the snares of Hiawatha.

From his place of ambush came he,  
 Striding terrible among them,  
 And so awful was his aspect 140  
 That the bravest quailed with terror.  
 Without mercy he destroyed them  
 Right and left, by tens and twenties,  
 And their wretched, lifeless bodies  
 Hung aloft on poles for scarecrows  
 Round the consecrated cornfields,  
 As a signal of his vengeance,  
 As a warning to marauders.

Only Kahgahgee, the leader,  
 Kahgahgee, the King of Ravens, 150  
 He alone was spared among them  
 As a hostage for his people.  
 With his prisoner-string he bound him,  
 Led him captive to his wigwam,

Tied him fast with cords of elm-bark  
 To the ridge-pole of his wigwam.

'Kahgahgee, my raven!' said he,  
 'You the leader of the robbers,  
 You the plotter of this mischief,  
 The contriver of this outrage, 160  
 I will keep you, I will hold you,  
 As a hostage for your people,  
 As a pledge of good behavior!'

And he left him, grim and sulky,  
 Sitting in the morning sunshine  
 On the summit of the wigwam,  
 Croaking fiercely his displeasure,  
 Flapping his great sable pinions,  
 Vainly struggling for his freedom,  
 Vainly calling on his people! 170

Summer passed, and Shawondasee  
 Breathed his sighs o'er all the landscape,  
 From the South-land sent his ardors,  
 Wafted kisses warm and tender;  
 And the maize-field grew and ripened,  
 Till it stood in all the splendor  
 Of its garments green and yellow,  
 Of its tassels and its plumage,  
 And the maize-ears full and shining  
 Gleamed from bursting sheaths of verdure.

Then Nokomis, the old woman, 180  
 Spoke, and said to Minnehaha:  
 'Tis the Moon when leaves are falling;  
 All the wild rice has been gathered,  
 And the maize is ripe and ready;  
 Let us gather in the harvest,  
 Let us wrestle with Mondamin,  
 Strip him of his plumes and tassels,  
 Of his garments green and yellow!'

And the merry Laughing Water 190  
 Went rejoicing from the wigwam,  
 With Nokomis, old and wrinkled,  
 And they called the women round them,  
 Called the young men and the maidens,  
 To the harvest of the cornfields,  
 To the husking of the maize-ear.

On the border of the forest,  
 Underneath the fragrant pine-trees,  
 Sat the old men and the warriors  
 Smoking in the pleasant shadow. 200  
 In uninterrupted silence  
 Looked they at the gamesome labor  
 Of the young men and the women;  
 Listened to their noisy talking,  
 To their laughter and their singing,  
 Heard them chattering like the magpies,  
 Heard them laughing like the blue-jays,  
 Heard them singing like the robins.

And whene'er some lucky maiden



Found a red ear in the husking, 210  
 Found a maize-ear red as blood is,  
 'Nushka!' cried they all together,  
 'Nushka! you shall have a sweetheart,  
 You shall have a handsome husband!'  
 'Ugh!' the old men all responded  
 From their seats beneath the pine-trees.

And whene'er a youth or maiden  
 Found a crooked ear in husking,  
 Found a maize-ear in the husking  
 Blighted, mildewed, or misshapen, 220  
 Then they laughed and sang together,  
 Crept and limped about the cornfields,  
 Mimicked in their gait and gestures  
 Some old man, bent almost double,  
 Singing singly or together:

'Wagemin, the thief of cornfields!  
 Paimosaid, who steals the maize-ear!'<sup>1</sup>  
 Till the cornfields rang with laughter,  
 Till from Hiawatha's wigwam  
 Kahgahgee, the King of Ravens, 230  
 Screamed and quivered in his anger,  
 And from all the neighboring tree-tops  
 Cawed and croaked the black marauders.  
 'Ugh!' the old men all responded,  
 From their seats beneath the pine-trees!

## XIV

## PICTURE-WRITING

In those days said Hiawatha,  
 'Lo! how all things fade and perish!  
 From the memory of the old men

<sup>1</sup> 'If one of the young female huskers finds a red ear of corn, it is typical of a brave admirer, and is regarded as a fitting present to some young warrior. But if the ear be crooked, and tapering to a point, no matter what color, the whole circle is set in a roar, and *wa-ge-min* is the word shouted aloud. It is the symbol of a thief in the cornfield. It is considered as the image of an old man stooping as he enters the lot. Had the chisel of Praxiteles been employed to produce this image, it could not more vividly bring to the minds of the merry group the idea of a pilferer of their favorite *mondamin*.

'The literal meaning of the term is, a mass, or crooked ear of grain; but the ear of corn so called is a conventional type of a little old man pilfering ears of corn in a cornfield. It is in this manner that a single word or term, in these curious languages, becomes the fruitful parent of many ideas. And we can thus perceive why it is that the word *wagemin* is alone competent to excite merriment in the husking circle.

'This term is taken as a basis of the cereal chorus, or corn song, as sung by the Northern Algonquin tribes. It is coupled with the phrase *Paimosaid*, — a permutative form of the Indian substantive, made from the verb *pim-o-sa*, to walk. Its literal meaning is, *he who walks*, or *the walker*; but the ideas conveyed by it are, *he who walks by night to pilfer corn*. It offers, therefore, a kind of parallelism in expression to the preceding term.' — *Oncôta*, p. 254. (LONGFELLOW.)

Pass away the great traditions,  
 The achievements of the warriors,  
 The adventures of the hunters,  
 All the wisdom of the Medas,  
 All the craft of the Wabenos,  
 All the marvellous dreams and visions  
 Of the Jossakeeds, the Prophets! 10

'Great men die and are forgotten,  
 Wise men speak; their words of wisdom  
 Perish in the ears that hear them,  
 Do not reach the generations  
 That, as yet unborn, are waiting  
 In the great, mysterious darkness  
 Of the speechless days that shall be!

'On the grave-posts of our fathers  
 Are no signs, no figures painted;  
 Who are in those graves we know not, 20  
 Only know they are our fathers.  
 Of what kith they are and kindred,  
 From what old, ancestral Totem,  
 Be it Eagle, Bear, or Beaver,  
 They descended, this we know not,  
 Only know they are our fathers.

'Face to face we speak together,  
 But we cannot speak when absent,  
 Cannot send our voices from us  
 To the friends that dwell afar off; 30  
 Cannot send a secret message,  
 But the bearer learns our secret,  
 May pervert it, may betray it,  
 May reveal it unto others.'

Thus said Hiawatha, walking  
 In the solitary forest,  
 Pondering, musing in the forest,  
 On the welfare of his people.

From his pouch he took his colors,  
 Took his paints of different colors, 40  
 On the smooth bark of a birch-tree  
 Painted many shapes and figures,  
 Wonderful and mystic figures,  
 And each figure had a meaning,  
 Each some word or thought suggested.

Gitche Manito the Mighty,  
 He, the Master of Life, was painted  
 As an egg, with points projecting  
 To the four winds of the heavens.  
 Everywhere is the Great Spirit, 50  
 Was the meaning of this symbol.

Mitche Manito the Mighty,  
 He the dreadful Spirit of Evil,  
 As a serpent was depicted,  
 As Kenabeek, the great serpent.  
 Very crafty, very cunning,  
 Is the creeping Spirit of Evil,  
 Was the meaning of this symbol.

Life and Death he drew as circles,  
Life was white, but Death was dark-  
ened; 60

Sun and moon and stars he painted,  
Man and beast, and fish and reptile,  
Forests, mountains, lakes, and rivers.

For the earth he drew a straight line,  
For the sky a bow above it;

White the space between for daytime,  
Filled with little stars for night-time;

On the left a point for sunrise,

On the right a point for sunset,

On the top a point for noontide, 70

And for rain and cloudy weather

Waving lines descending from it.

Footprints pointing towards a wigwam  
Were a sign of invitation,

Were a sign of guests assembling;

Bloody hands with palms uplifted

Were a symbol of destruction,

Were a hostile sign and symbol.

All these things did Hiawatha

Show unto his wondering people, 80

And interpreted their meaning,

And he said: 'Behold, your grave-posts

Have no mark, no sign, nor symbol,

Go and paint them all with figures;

Each one with its household symbol,

With its own ancestral Totem;

So that those who follow after

May distinguish them and know them.

And they painted on the grave-posts

On the graves yet unforgotten, 90

Each his own ancestral Totem,

Each the symbol of his household;

Figures of the Bear and Reindeer,

Of the Turtle, Crane, and Beaver,

Each inverted as a token

That the owner was departed,

That the chief who bore the symbol

Lay beneath in dust and ashes.

And the Jossakeeds, the Prophets, 100

The Wabenos, the Magicians,

And the Medicine-men, the Medas,

Painted upon bark and deer-skin

Figures for the songs they chanted,

For each song a separate symbol,

Figures mystical and awful,

Figures strange and brightly colored;

And each figure had its meaning,

Each some magic song suggested.

The Great Spirit, the Creator,

Flashing light through all the heaven; 110

The Great Serpent, the Kenabeek,

With his bloody crest erected,

Creeping, looking into heaven;

In the sky the sun, that listens,

And the moon eclipsed and dying;

Owl and eagle, crane and hen-hawk,

And the cormorant, bird of magic;

Headless men, that walk the heavens,

Bodies lying pierced with arrows,

Bloody hands of death uplifted, 120

Flags on graves, and great war-captains

Grasping both the earth and heaven!

Such as these the shapes they painted

On the birch-bark and the deer-skin;

Songs of war and songs of hunting,

Songs of medicine and of magic,

All were written in these figures,

For each figure had its meaning,

Each its separate song recorded.

Nor forgotten was the Love-Song, 130

The most subtle of all medicines,

The most potent spell of magic,

Dangerous more than war or hunting!

Thus the Love-Song was recorded,

Symbol and interpretation.

First a human figure standing,

Painted in the brightest scarlet;

'T is the lover, the musician,

And the meaning is, 'My painting

Makes me powerful over others.' 140

Then the figure seated, singing,

Playing on a drum of magic,

And the interpretation, 'Listen!

'T is my voice you hear, my singing!'

Then the same red figure seated

In the shelter of a wigwam,

And the meaning of the symbol,

'I will come and sit beside you

In the mystery of my passion!'

Then two figures, man and woman, 150

Standing hand in hand together

With their hands so clasped together

That they seemed in one united,

And the words thus represented

Are, 'I see your heart within you,

And your cheeks are red with blushes!'

Next the maiden on an island,

In the centre of an island;

And the song this shape suggested

Was, 'Though you were at a distance, 160

Were upon some far-off island,

Such the spell I cast upon you,

Such the magic power of passion,

I could straightway draw you to me!'

Then the figure of the maiden

Sleeping, and the lover near her,

Whispering to her in her slumbers,



Saying, 'Though you were far from me  
In the land of Sleep and Silence,  
Still the voice of love would reach you !' 170

And the last of all the figures  
Was a heart within a circle,  
Drawn within a magic circle;  
And the image had this meaning:  
'Naked lies your heart before me,  
To your naked heart I whisper !'

Thus it was that Hiawatha,  
In his wisdom, taught the people  
All the mysteries of painting,  
All the art of Picture-Writing, 180  
On the smooth bark of the birch-tree,  
On the white skin of the reindeer,  
On the grave-posts of the village.

## XV

## HIAWATHA'S LAMENTATION

In those days the Evil Spirits,  
All the Manitos of mischief,  
Fearing Hiawatha's wisdom,  
And his love for Chibiabos,  
Jealous of their faithful friendship,  
And their noble words and actions,  
Made at length a league against them,  
To molest them and destroy them.

Hiawatha, wise and wary,  
Often said to Chibiabos, 10  
'O my brother ! do not leave me,  
Lest the Evil Spirits harm you !'  
Chibiabos, young and heedless,  
Laughing shook his coal-black tresses,  
Answered ever sweet and childlike,  
'Do not fear for me, O brother !  
Harm and evil come not near me !'

Once when Peboan, the Winter,  
Roofed with ice the Big-Sea-Water,  
When the snow-flakes, whirling downward,  
Hisssed among the withered oak-leaves, 21  
Changed the pine-trees into wigwams,  
Covered all the earth with silence, —  
Armed with arrows, shod with snow-shoes,  
Heeding not his brother's warning,  
Fearing not the Evil Spirits,  
Forth to hunt the deer with antlers  
All alone went Chibiabos.

Right across the Big-Sea-Water  
Sprang with speed the deer before him. 30  
With the wind and snow he followed,  
O'er the treacherous ice he followed,  
Wild with all the fierce commotion  
And the rapture of the hunting.

But beneath, the Evil Spirits  
Lay in ambush, waiting for him,  
Broke the treacherous ice beneath him,  
Dragged him downward to the bottom,  
Buried in the sand his body. 40  
Unktahee, the god of water,  
He the god of the Dacotahs,  
Drowned him in the deep abysses  
Of the lake of Gitche Gumee.

From the headlands Hiawatha  
Sent forth such a wail of anguish,  
Such a fearful lamentation,  
That the bison paused to listen,  
And the wolves howled from the prairies,  
And the thunder in the distance  
Starting answered, 'Baim-wawa !' 50

Then his face with black he painted,  
With his robe his head he covered,  
In his wigwam sat lamenting,  
Seven long weeks he sat lamenting,  
Uttering still this moan of sorrow : —

'He is dead, the sweet musician !  
He the sweetest of all singers !  
He has gone from us forever,  
He has moved a little nearer  
To the Master of all music, 60  
To the Master of all singing !  
O my brother, Chibiabos !'

And the melancholy fir-trees  
Waved their dark green fans above him,  
Waved their purple cones above him,  
Sighing with him to console him,  
Mingling with his lamentation  
Their complaining, their lamenting.

Came the Spring, and all the forest  
Looked in vain for Chibiabos; 70  
Sighed the rivulet, Sebowisha,  
Sighed the rushes in the meadow.

From the tree-tops sang the bluebird,  
Sang the bluebird, the Owaissa,  
'Chibiabos ! Chibiabos !  
He is dead, the sweet musician !'

From the wigwam sang the robin,  
Sang the robin, the Opechee,  
'Chibiabos ! Chibiabos !  
He is dead, the sweetest singer !' 80

And at night through all the forest  
Went the whippoorwill complaining,  
Wailing went the Wawonaissa,  
'Chibiabos ! Chibiabos !

He is dead, the sweet musician !  
He the sweetest of all singers !'

Then the Medicine-men, the Medas,  
The magicians, the Wabenos,  
And the Jossakeeds, the Prophets,

Came to visit Hiawatha;  
 Built a Sacred Lodge beside him,  
 To appease him, to console him,  
 Walked in silent, grave procession,  
 Bearing each a pouch of healing,  
 Skin of beaver, lynx, or otter,  
 Filled with magic roots and simples,  
 Filled with very potent medicines.

When he heard their steps approaching,  
 Hiawatha ceased lamenting,  
 Called no more on Chibiabos;  
 Naught he questioned, naught he answered,  
 But his mournful head uncovered,  
 From his face the mourning colors  
 Washed he slowly and in silence,  
 Slowly and in silence followed  
 Onward to the Sacred Wigwam.

There a magic drink they gave him,  
 Made of Nahma-wusk, the spearmint,  
 And Wabeno-wusk, the yarrow,  
 Roots of power, and herbs of healing;  
 Beat their drums, and shook their rattles;  
 Chanted singly and in chorus,  
 Mystic songs like these, they chanted.

'I myself, myself! behold me!  
 'T is the great Gray Eagle talking;  
 Come, ye white crows, come and hear him!  
 The loud-speaking thunder helps me;  
 All the unseen spirits help me;  
 I can hear their voices calling,  
 All around the sky I hear them!  
 I can blow you strong, my brother,  
 I can heal you, Hiawatha!'

'Hi-au-ha!' replied the chorus,  
 'Way-ha-way!' the mystic chorus.  
 'Friends of mine are all the serpents!  
 Hear me shake my skin of hen-hawk!  
 Mahng, the white loon, I can kill him;  
 I can shoot your heart and kill it!  
 I can blow you strong, my brother,  
 I can heal you, Hiawatha!'

'Hi-au-ha!' replied the chorus.  
 'Way-ha-way!' the mystic chorus.  
 'I myself, myself! the prophet!  
 When I speak the wigwam trembles,  
 Shakes the Sacred Lodge with terror,  
 Hands unseen begin to shake it!  
 When I walk, the sky I tread on  
 Bends and makes a noise beneath me!  
 I can blow you strong, my brother!  
 Rise and speak, O Hiawatha!'

'Hi-au-ha!' replied the chorus,  
 'Way-ha-way!' the mystic chorus.  
 Then they shook their medicine-pouches  
 O'er the head of Hiawatha,

Danced their medicine-dance around him;  
 And upstarting wild and haggard,  
 Like a man from dreams awakened,  
 He was healed of all his madness.  
 As the clouds are swept from heaven,  
 Straightway from his brain departed  
 All his moody melancholy;  
 As the ice is swept from rivers,  
 Straightway from his heart departed  
 All his sorrow and affliction.

Then they summoned Chibiabos  
 From his grave beneath the waters,  
 From the sands of Gitche Gumees  
 Summoned Hiawatha's brother.  
 And so mighty was the magic  
 Of that cry and invocation,  
 That he heard it as he lay there  
 Underneath the Big-Sea-Water;  
 From the sand he rose and listened,  
 Heard the music and the singing,  
 Came, obedient to the summons,  
 To the doorway of the wigwam,  
 But to enter they forbade him.

Through a chink a coal they gave him,  
 Through the door a burning fire-brand;  
 Ruler in the Land of Spirits,  
 Ruler o'er the dead, they made him,  
 Telling him a fire to kindle  
 For all those that died thereafter,  
 Camp-fires for their night encampments  
 On their solitary journey  
 To the kingdom of Ponemah,  
 To the land of the Hereafter.

From the village of his childhood,  
 From the homes of those who knew him,  
 Passing silent through the forest,  
 Like a smoke-wreath wafted sideways,  
 Slowly vanished Chibiabos!  
 Where he passed, the branches moved not,  
 Where he trod, the grasses bent not,  
 And the fallen leaves of last year  
 Made no sound beneath his footsteps.

Four whole days he journeyed onward  
 Down the pathway of the dead men;  
 On the dead-man's strawberry feasted,  
 Crossed the melancholy river,  
 On the swinging log he crossed it,  
 Came unto the Lake of Silver,  
 In the Stone Canoe was carried  
 To the Islands of the Blessed,  
 To the land of ghosts and shadows.

On that journey, moving slowly,  
 Many weary spirits saw he,  
 Panting under heavy burdens,  
 Laden with war-clubs, bows and arrows,

Robes of fur, and pots and kettles, 200  
And with food that friends had given  
For that solitary journey.

'Ay! why do the living,' said they,  
'Lay such heavy burdens on us!  
Better were it to go naked,  
Better were it to go fasting,  
Than to bear such heavy burdens  
On our long and weary journey!'

Forth then issued Hiawatha,  
Wandered eastward, wandered westward, 211  
Teaching men the use of simples  
And the antidotes for poisons,  
And the cure of all diseases.  
Thus was first made known to mortals  
All the mystery of Medamin,  
All the sacred art of healing.

## XVI

## PAU-PUK-KEEWIS

You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
He, the handsome Yenadizze,  
Whom the people called the Storm-Fool,  
Vexed the village with disturbance;  
You shall hear of all his mischief,  
And his flight from Hiawatha,  
And his wondrous transmigrations,  
And the end of his adventures.

On the shores of Gitche Gumee,  
On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo, 10  
By the shining Big-Sea-Water  
Stood the lodge of Pau-Puk-Keewis.  
It was he who in his frenzy  
Whirled these drifting sands together,  
On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo,  
When, among the guests assembled,  
He so merrily and madly  
Danced at Hiawatha's wedding,  
Danced the Beggar's Dance to please them.

Now, in search of new adventures, 20  
From his lodge went Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
Came with speed into the village,  
Found the young men all assembled  
In the lodge of old Iagoo,  
Listening to his monstrous stories,  
To his wonderful adventures.

He was telling them the story  
Of Ojeeg, the Summer-Maker,  
How he made a hole in heaven,  
How he climbed up into heaven, 30  
And let out the summer-weather,  
The perpetual, pleasant Summer;

How the Otter first essayed it;  
How the Beaver, Lynx, and Badger  
Tried in turn the great achievement,  
From the summit of the mountain  
Smote their fists against the heavens,  
Smote against the sky their foreheads,  
Cracked the sky, but could not break it;  
How the Wolverine, uprising, 40  
Made him ready for the encounter,  
Bent his knees down, like a squirrel,  
Drew his arms back, like a cricket.

'Once he leaped,' said old Iagoo,  
'Once he leaped, and lo! above him  
Bent the sky, as ice in rivers  
When the waters rise beneath it;  
Twice he leaped, and lo! above him  
Cracked the sky, as ice in rivers  
When the freshet is at highest! 50  
Thrice he leaped, and lo! above him  
Broke the shattered sky asunder,  
And he disappeared within it,  
And Ojeeg, the Fisher Weasel,  
With a bound went in behind him!'

'Hark you!' shouted Pau-Puk-Keewis  
As he entered at the doorway;  
'I am tired of all this talking,  
Tired of old Iagoo's stories,  
Tired of Hiawatha's wisdom. 60  
Here is something to amuse you,  
Better than this endless talking.'

Then from out his pouch of wolf-skin  
Forth he drew, with solemn manner,  
All the game of Bowl and Counters,<sup>1</sup>  
Pugasaing, with thirteen pieces.  
White on one side were they painted,  
And vermilion on the other;  
Two Kenabeeks or great serpents,  
Two Ininewug or wedge-men, 70  
One great war-club, Pugamaugun,  
And one slender fish, the Keego,  
Four round pieces, Ozawabeeks,  
And three Sheshebwug or ducklings.  
All were made of bone and painted,  
All except the Ozawabeeks;  
These were brass, on one side burnished,  
And were black upon the other.

In a wooden bowl he placed them,  
Shook and jostled them together, 80  
Threw them on the ground before him,  
Thus exclaiming and explaining:

<sup>1</sup> This Game of the Bowl is the principal game of hazard among the Northern tribes of Indians. Mr. Schoolcraft gives a particular account of it in *Oneida*, p. 85. . . . See also his *History, Conditions, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes*, part II, p. 72. (LONGFELLOW.)

'Red side up are all the pieces,  
And one great Kenabeek standing  
On the bright side of a brass piece,  
On a burnished Ozawabeek;  
Thirteen tens and eight are counted.'

Then again he shook the pieces,  
Shook and jostled them together,  
Threw them on the ground before him, 90  
Still exclaiming and explaining:

'White are both the great Kenabeeks,  
White the Ininewug, the wedge-men,  
Red are all the other pieces;  
Five tens and an eight are counted.'

Thus he taught the game of hazard,  
Thus displayed it and explained it,  
Running through its various chances,  
Various changes, various meanings:  
Twenty curious eyes stared at him, 100  
Full of eagerness stared at him.

'Many games,' said old Iagoo,  
'Many games of skill and hazard  
Have I seen in different nations,  
Have I played in different countries.  
He who plays with old Iagoo  
Must have very nimble fingers;  
Though you think yourself so skilful,  
I can beat you, Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
I can even give you lessons 110  
In your game of Bowl and Counters!'

So they sat and played together,  
All the old men and the young men,  
Played for dresses, weapons, wampum,  
Played till midnight, played till morn-  
ing,

Played until the Yenadizze,  
Till the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
Of their treasures had despoiled them,  
Of the best of all their dresses,  
Shirts of deer-skin, robes of ermine, 120  
Belts of wampum, crests of feathers,  
Warlike weapons, pipes and pouches.  
Twenty eyes glared wildly at him,  
Like the eyes of wolves glared at him.

Said the lucky Pau-Puk-Keewis:  
'In my wigwam I am lonely,  
In my wanderings and adventures  
I have need of a companion,  
Fain would have a Meshinauwa,  
An attendant and pipe-bearer. 130  
I will venture all these winnings,  
All these garments heaped about me,  
All this wampum, all these feathers,  
On a single throw will venture  
All against the young man yonder!'  
'T was a youth of sixteen summers,

'T was a nephew of Iagoo;  
Face-in-a-Mist, the people called him.

As the fire burns in a pipe-head  
Dusky red beneath the ashes, 140  
So beneath his shaggy eyebrows  
Glowed the eyes of old Iagoo.

'Ugh!' he answered very fiercely;  
'Ugh!' they answered all and each one.

Seized the wooden bowl the old man,  
Closely in his bony fingers  
Clutched the fatal bowl, Onagon,  
Shook it fiercely and with fury,  
Made the pieces ring together  
As he threw them down before him. 150

Red were both the great Kenabeeks,  
Red the Ininewug, the wedge-men,  
Red the Sheshebwug, the ducklings,  
Black the four brass Ozawabeeks,  
White alone the fish, the Keego;  
Only five the pieces counted!

Then the smiling Pau-Puk-Keewis  
Shook the bowl and threw the pieces;  
Lightly in the air he tossed them,  
And they fell about him scattered; 160  
Dark and bright the Ozawabeeks,  
Red and white the other pieces,  
And upright among the others  
One Ininewug was standing,  
Even as crafty Pau-Puk-Keewis  
Stood alone among the players,  
Saying, 'Five tens! mine the game is!'

Twenty eyes glared at him fiercely,  
Like the eyes of wolves glared at him,  
As he turned and left the wigwam, 170  
Followed by his Meshinauwa,  
By the nephew of Iagoo,  
By the tall and graceful stripling,  
Bearing in his arms the winnings,  
Shirts of deer-skin, robes of ermine,  
Belts of wampum, pipes and weapons.

'Carry them,' said Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
Pointing with his fan of feathers,  
'To my wigwam far to eastward,  
On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo!' 180

Hot and red with smoke and gambling  
Were the eyes of Pau-Puk-Keewis  
As he came forth to the freshness  
Of the pleasant Summer morning.  
All the birds were singing gayly,  
All the streamlets flowing swiftly,  
And the heart of Pau-Puk-Keewis  
Sang with pleasure as the birds sing,  
Beat with triumph like the streamlets,  
As he wandered through the village, 190  
In the early gray of morning,

With his fan of turkey-feathers,  
With his plumes and tufts of swan's down,  
Till he reached the farthest wigwam,  
Reached the lodge of Hiawatha.

Silent was it and deserted;  
No one met him at the doorway,  
No one came to bid him welcome;  
But the birds were singing round it,  
In and out and round the doorway, 200  
Hopping, singing, fluttering, feeding,  
And aloft upon the ridge-pole  
Kahgahgee, the King of Ravens,  
Sat with fiery eyes, and, screaming,  
Flapped his wings at Pau-Puk-Keewis.

'All are gone! the lodge is empty!'  
Thus it was spake Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
In his heart resolving mischief; —  
'Gone is wary Hiawatha,

Gone the silly Laughing Water, 210  
Gone Nokomis, the old woman,  
And the lodge is left unguarded!'

By the neck he seized the raven,  
Whirled it round him like a rattle,  
Like a medicine-pouch he shook it,  
Strangled Kahgahgee, the raven,  
From the ridge-pole of the wigwam  
Left its lifeless body hanging,  
As an insult to its master,  
As a taunt to Hiawatha. 220

With a stealthy step he entered,  
Round the lodge in wild disorder  
Threw the household things about him,  
Piled together in confusion  
Bowls of wood and earthen kettles,  
Robes of buffalo and beaver,  
Skins of otter, lynx, and ermine,  
As an insult to Nokomis,  
As a taunt to Minnehaha.

Then departed Pau-Puk-Keewis, 230  
Whistling, singing through the forest,  
Whistling gayly to the squirrels,  
Who from hollow boughs above him  
Dropped their acorn-shells upon him,  
Singing gayly to the wood birds,  
Who from out the leafy darkness  
Answered with a song as merry.

Then he climbed the rocky headlands,  
Looking o'er the Gitche Gumees,  
Perched himself upon their summit, 240  
Waiting full of mirth and mischief  
The return of Hiawatha.

Stretched upon his back he lay there;  
Far below him plashed the waters,  
Plashed and washed the dreamy waters;  
Far above him swam the heavens,

Swam the dizzy, dreamy heavens;  
Round him hovered, fluttered, rustled  
Hiawatha's mountain chickens,  
Flock-wise swept and wheeled about him,  
Almost brushed him with their pinions. 251

And he killed them as he lay there,  
Slaughtered them by tens and twenties,  
Threw their bodies down the headland,  
Threw them on the beach below him,  
Till at length Kayoshk, the sea-gull,  
Perched upon a crag above them,  
Shouted: 'It is Pau-Puk-Keewis!  
He is slaying us by hundreds!  
Send a message to our brother, 260  
Tidings send to Hiawatha!'

## XVII

## THE HUNTING OF PAU-PUK-KEEWIS

FULL of wrath was Hiawatha  
When he came into the village,  
Found the people in confusion,  
Heard of all the misdemeanors,  
All the malice and the mischief,  
Of the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis.

Hard his breath came through his nostrils,

Through his teeth he buzzed and muttered  
Words of anger and resentment,  
Hot and humming, like a hornet. 10

'I will slay this Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
Slay this mischief-maker!' said he.  
'Not so long and wide the world is,  
Not so rude and rough the way is,  
That my wrath shall not attain him,  
That my vengeance shall not reach him!'

Then in swift pursuit departed  
Hiawatha and the hunters  
On the trail of Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
Through the forest, where he passed it, 20  
To the headlands where he rested;  
But they found not Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
Only in the trampled grasses,  
In the whortleberry-bushes,  
Found the couch where he had rested,  
Found the impress of his body.

From the lowlands far beneath them,  
From the Muskoday, the meadow,  
Pau-Puk-Keewis, turning backward,  
Made a gesture of defiance, 30  
Made a gesture of derision;  
And aloud cried Hiawatha,  
From the summit of the mountains:

'Not so long and wide the world is,  
Not so rude and rough the way is,  
But my wrath shall overtake you,  
And my vengeance shall attain you !'

Over rock and over river,  
Thorough bush, and brake, and forest,  
Ran the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis; 40  
Like an antelope he bounded,  
Till he came unto a streamlet  
In the middle of the forest,  
To a streamlet still and tranquil,  
That had overflowed its margin,  
To a dam made by the beavers,  
To a pond of quiet water,  
Where knee-deep the trees were standing,  
Where the water-lilies floated,  
Where the rushes waved and whispered. 50

On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
On the dam of trunks and branches,  
Through whose chinks the water spouted,  
O'er whose summit flowed the streamlet.  
From the bottom rose the beaver,  
Looked with two great eyes of wonder,  
Eyes that seemed to ask a question,  
At the stranger, Pau-Puk-Keewis.

On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
O'er his ankles flowed the streamlet, 60  
Flowed the bright and silvery water,  
And he spake unto the beaver,  
With a smile he spake in this wise:

'O my friend Ahmeek, the beaver,  
Cool and pleasant is the water;  
Let me dive into the water,  
Let me rest there in your lodges;  
Change me, too, into a beaver !'

Cautiously replied the beaver,  
With reserve he thus made answer: 70  
'Let me first consult the others,  
Let me ask the other beavers.'  
Down he sank into the water,  
Heavily sank he, as a stone sinks,  
Down among the leaves and branches,  
Brown and matted at the bottom.

On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
O'er his ankles flowed the streamlet,  
Spouted through the chinks below him,  
Dashed upon the stones beneath him, 80  
Spread serene and calm before him,  
And the sunshine and the shadows  
Fell in flecks and gleams upon him,  
Fell in little shining patches,  
Through the waving, rustling branches.

From the bottom rose the beavers,  
Silently above the surface  
Rose one head and then another,

Till the pond seemed full of beavers,  
Full of black and shining faces. 90

To the beavers Pau-Puk-Keewis  
Spake entreating, said in this wise:  
'Very pleasant is your dwelling,  
O my friends ! and safe from danger;  
Can you not, with all your cunning,  
All your wisdom and contrivance,  
Change me, too, into a beaver ?'

'Yes !' replied Ahmeek, the beaver,  
He the King of all the beavers,  
'Let yourself slide down among us, 100  
Down into the tranquil water.'

Down into the pond among them  
Silently sank Pau-Puk-Keewis;  
Black became his shirt of deer-skin,  
Black his moccasins and leggings,  
In a broad black tail behind him  
Spread his fox-tails and his fringes;  
He was changed into a beaver.

'Make me large,' said Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
'Make me large and make me larger, 110  
Larger than the other beavers.'

'Yes,' the beaver chief responded,  
'When our lodge below you enter,  
In our wigwam we will make you  
Ten times larger than the others.'

Thus into the clear, brown water  
Silently sank Pau-Puk-Keewis:  
Found the bottom covered over  
With the trunks of trees and branches, 120  
Hoards of food against the winter,  
Piles and heaps against the famine;  
Found the lodge with arching doorway,  
Leading into spacious chambers.

Here they made him large and larger,  
Made him largest of the beavers,  
Ten times larger than the others.  
'You shall be our ruler,' said they;  
'Chief and King of all the beavers.'

But not long had Pau-Puk-Keewis  
Sat in state among the beavers, 130  
When there came a voice of warning  
From the watchman at his station  
In the water-flags and lilies,  
Saying, 'Here is Hiawatha !  
Hiawatha with his hunters !'

Then they heard a cry above them,  
Heard a shouting and a tramping,  
Heard a crashing and a rushing,  
And the water round and o'er them  
Sank and sucked away in eddies, 140  
And they knew their dam was broken.

On the lodge's roof the hunters  
Leaped, and broke it all asunder;



Streamed the sunshine through the crevice,  
 Sprang the beavers through the doorway,  
 Hid themselves in deeper water,  
 In the channel of the streamlet;  
 But the mighty Pau-Puk-Keewis  
 Could not pass beneath the doorway;  
 He was puffed with pride and feeding, 150  
 He was swollen like a bladder.

Through the roof looked Hiawatha,  
 Cried aloud, 'O Pau-Puk-Keewis!  
 Vain are all your craft and cunning,  
 Vain your manifold disguises!  
 Well I know you, Pau-Puk-Keewis!  
 With their clubs they beat and bruised  
 him,

Beat to death poor Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Pounded him as maize is pounded,  
 Till his skull was crushed to pieces. 160

Six tall hunters, lithe and limber,  
 Bore him home on poles and branches,  
 Bore the body of the beaver;  
 But the ghost, the Jeebi in him,  
 Thought and felt as Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Still lived on as Pau-Puk-Keewis.

And it fluttered, strove, and struggled,  
 Waving hither, waving thither,  
 As the curtains of a wigwam  
 Struggle with their thongs of deer-skin, 170  
 When the wintry wind is blowing;  
 Till it drew itself together,  
 Till it rose up from the body,  
 Till it took the form and features  
 Of the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis  
 Vanishing into the forest.

But the wary Hiawatha  
 Saw the figure ere it vanished,  
 Saw the form of Pau-Puk-Keewis  
 Glide into the soft blue shadow 180  
 Of the pine-trees of the forest;  
 Toward the squares of white beyond it,  
 Toward an opening in the forest,  
 Like a wind it rushed and panted,  
 Bending all the boughs before it,  
 And behind it, as the rain comes,  
 Came the steps of Hiawatha.

To a lake with many islands  
 Came the breathless Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Where among the water-lilies 190  
 Pishnekuh, the brant, were sailing;  
 Through the tufts of rushes floating,  
 Steering through the reedy islands.  
 Now their broad black beaks they lifted,  
 Now they plunged beneath the water,  
 Now they darkened in the shadow,  
 Now they brightened in the sunshine.

'Pishnekuh!' cried Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 'Pishnekuh! my brothers!' said he,  
 'Change me to a brant with plumage, 200  
 With a shining neck and feathers,  
 Make me large, and make me larger,  
 Ten times larger than the others.'

Straightway to a brant they changed him,  
 With two huge and dusky pinions,  
 With a bosom smooth and rounded,  
 With a bill like two great paddles,  
 Made him larger than the others,  
 Ten times larger than the largest,  
 Just as, shouting from the forest, 210  
 On the shore stood Hiawatha.

Up they rose with cry and clamor,  
 With a whir and beat of pinions,  
 Rose up from the reedy islands,  
 From the water-flags and lilies.  
 And they said to Pau-Puk-Keewis:  
 'In your flying, look not downward,  
 Take good heed and look not downward,  
 Lest some strange mischance should hap-  
 pen,

Lest some great mishap befall you!' 220  
 Fast and far they fled to northward,  
 Fast and far through mist and sunshine,  
 Fed among the moors and fen-lands,  
 Slept among the reeds and rushes.

On the morrow as they journeyed,  
 Buoyed and lifted by the South-wind,  
 Wafted onward by the South-wind,  
 Blowing fresh and strong behind them,  
 Rose a sound of human voices,  
 Rose a clamor from beneath them, 230  
 From the lodges of a village,  
 From the people miles beneath them.

For the people of the village  
 Saw the flock of brant with wonder,  
 Saw the wings of Pau-Puk-Keewis  
 Flapping far up in the ether,  
 Broader than two doorway curtains.

Pau-Puk-Keewis heard the shouting,  
 Knew the voice of Hiawatha,  
 Knew the outcry of Iagoo, 240  
 And, forgetful of the warning,  
 Drew his neck in, and looked downward,  
 And the wind that blew behind him  
 Caught his mighty fan of feathers,  
 Sent him wheeling, whirling downward!

All in vain did Pau-Puk-Keewis  
 Struggle to regain his balance!  
 Whirling round and round and downward,  
 He beheld in turn the village  
 And in turn the flock above him, 250  
 Saw the village coming nearer,



And the flock receding farther,  
 Heard the voices growing louder,  
 Heard the shouting and the laughter;  
 Saw no more the flocks above him,  
 Only saw the earth beneath him;  
 Dead out of the empty heaven,  
 Dead among the shouting people,  
 With a heavy sound and sullen,  
 Fell the brant with broken pinions. 260

But his soul, his ghost, his shadow,  
 Still survived as Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Took again the form and features  
 Of the handsome Yenadizze,  
 And again went rushing onward,  
 Followed fast by Hiawatha,  
 Crying: 'Not so wide the world is,  
 Not so long and rough the way is,  
 But my wrath shall overtake you,  
 But my vengeance shall attain you!' 270

And so near he came, so near him,  
 That his hand was stretched to seize him,  
 His right hand to seize and hold him,  
 When the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis  
 Whirled and spun about in circles,  
 Fanned the air into a whirlwind,  
 Danced the dust and leaves about him,  
 And amid the whirling eddies  
 Sprang into a hollow oak-tree,  
 Changed himself into a serpent, 280  
 Gliding out through root and rubbish.

With his right hand Hiawatha  
 Smote amain the hollow oak-tree,  
 Rent it into shreds and splinters,  
 Left it lying there in fragments.  
 But in vain; for Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Once again in human figure,  
 Full in sight ran on before him,  
 Sped away in gust and whirlwind,  
 On the shores of Gitche Gumees, 290  
 Westward by the Big-Sea-Water,  
 Came unto the rocky headlands,  
 To the Pictured Rocks of sandstone,  
 Looking over lake and landscape.

And the Old Man of the Mountain,  
 He the Manito of Mountains,  
 Opened wide his rocky doorways,  
 Opened wide his deep abysses,  
 Giving Pau-Puk-Keewis shelter  
 In his caverns dark and dreary, 300  
 Bidding Pau-Puk-Keewis welcome  
 To his gloomy lodge of sandstone.

There without stood Hiawatha,  
 Found the doorways closed against him,  
 With his mittens, Minjekahwun,  
 Smote great caverns in the sandstone,

Cried aloud in tones of thunder,  
 'Open! I am Hiawatha!'  
 But the Old Man of the Mountain  
 Opened not, and made no answer 310  
 From the silent crags of sandstone,  
 From the gloomy rock abysses.

Then he raised his hands to heaven,  
 Called imploring on the tempest,  
 Called Waywassimo, the lightning,  
 And the thunder, Annemeekee;  
 And they came with night and darkness,  
 Sweeping down the Big-Sea-Water  
 From the distant Thunder Mountains;  
 And the trembling Pau-Puk-Keewis 320  
 Heard the footsteps of the thunder,  
 Saw the red eyes of the lightning,  
 Was afraid, and crouched and trembled.

Then Waywassimo, the lightning,  
 Smote the doorways of the caverns,  
 With his war-club smote the doorways,  
 Smote the jutting crags of sandstone,  
 And the thunder, Annemeekee,  
 Shouted down into the caverns,  
 Saying, 'Where is Pau-Puk-Keewis!' 330  
 And the crags fell, and beneath them  
 Dead among the rocky ruins  
 Lay the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Lay the handsome Yenadizze,  
 Slain in his own human figure.

Ended were his wild adventures,  
 Ended were his tricks and gambols,  
 Ended all his craft and cunning,  
 Ended all his mischief-making,  
 All his gambling and his dancing, 340  
 All his wooing of the maidens.

Then the noble Hiawatha  
 Took his soul, his ghost, his shadow,  
 Spake and said: 'O Pau-Puk-Keewis,  
 Never more in human figure  
 Shall you search for new adventures;  
 Never more with jest and laughter  
 Dance the dust and leaves in whirlwinds;  
 But above there in the heavens  
 You shall soar and sail in circles; 350  
 I will change you to an eagle,  
 To Keneu, the great war-eagle,  
 Chief of all the fowls with feathers,  
 Chief of Hiawatha's chickens.'

And the name of Pau-Puk-Keewis  
 Lingers still among the people,  
 Lingers still among the singers,  
 And among the story-tellers;  
 And in Winter, when the snow-flakes  
 Whirl in eddies round the lodges, 360  
 When the wind in gusty tumult

O'er the smoke-flue pipes and whistles,  
 'There,' they cry, 'comes Pau-Puk-Kee-  
 wis;  
 He is dancing through the village,  
 He is gathering in his harvest !'

## XVIII

## THE DEATH OF KWASIND

FAR and wide among the nations  
 Spread the name and fame of Kwasind;  
 No man dared to strive with Kwasind,  
 No man could compete with Kwasind.  
 But the mischievous Puk-Wudjies,  
 They the envious Little People,  
 They the fairies and the pygmies,  
 Plotted and conspired against him.

'If this hateful Kwasind,' said they,  
 'If this great, outrageous fellow  
 Goes on thus a little longer,  
 Tearing everything he touches,  
 Rending everything to pieces,  
 Filling all the world with wonder,  
 What becomes of the Puk-Wudjies ?  
 Who will care for the Puk-Wudjies ?  
 He will tread us down like mushrooms,  
 Drive us all into the water,  
 Give our bodies to be eaten  
 By the wicked Nee-ba-naw-baigs,  
 By the Spirits of the water !'

So the angry Little People  
 All conspired against the Strong Man,  
 All conspired to murder Kwasind,  
 Yes, to rid the world of Kwasind,  
 The audacious, overbearing,  
 Heartless, haughty, dangerous Kwasind !

Now this wondrous strength of Kwasind  
 In his crown alone was seated;  
 In his crown too was his weakness;  
 There alone could he be wounded,  
 Nowhere else could weapon pierce him,  
 Nowhere else could weapon harm him.

Even there the only weapon  
 That could wound him, that could slay him,  
 Was the seed-cone of the pine-tree,  
 Was the blue cone of the fir-tree.  
 This was Kwasind's fatal secret,  
 Known to no man among mortals;  
 But the cunning Little People,  
 The Puk-Wudjies, knew the secret,  
 Knew the only way to kill him.

So they gathered cones together,  
 Gathered seed-cones of the pine-tree,

Gathered blue cones of the fir-tree,  
 In the woods by Taquamenaw,  
 Brought them to the river's margin,  
 Heaped them in great piles together,  
 Where the red rocks from the margin  
 Jutting overhang the river.  
 There they lay in wait for Kwasind,  
 The malicious Little People.

'T was an afternoon in Summer;  
 Very hot and still the air was,  
 Very smooth the gliding river,  
 Motionless the sleeping shadows:  
 Insects glistened in the sunshine,  
 Insects skated on the water,  
 Filled the drowsy air with buzzing,  
 With a far resounding war-cry.

Down the river came the Strong Man,  
 In his birch canoe came Kwasind,  
 Floating slowly down the current  
 Of the sluggish Taquamenaw,  
 Very languid with the weather,  
 Very sleepy with the silence.

From the overhanging branches,  
 From the tassels of the birch-trees,  
 Soft the Spirit of Sleep descended;  
 By his airy hosts surrounded,  
 His invisible attendants,  
 Came the Spirit of Sleep, Nepahwin;  
 Like a burnished Dush-kwo-ne-she,  
 Like a dragon-fly, he hovered  
 O'er the drowsy head of Kwasind.

To his ear there came a murmur  
 As of waves upon a sea-shore,  
 As of far-off tumbling waters,  
 As of winds among the pine-trees;  
 And he felt upon his forehead  
 Blows of little airy war-clubs,  
 Wielded by the slumbrous legions  
 Of the Spirit of Sleep, Nepahwin,  
 As of some one breathing on him.

At the first blow of their war-clubs,  
 Fell a drowsiness on Kwasind;  
 At the second blow they smote him,  
 Motionless his paddle rested;  
 At the third, before his vision  
 Reeled the landscape into darkness,  
 Very sound asleep was Kwasind.

So he floated down the river,  
 Like a blind man seated upright,  
 Floated down the Taquamenaw,  
 Underneath the trembling birch-trees,  
 Underneath the wooded headlands,  
 Underneath the war encampment  
 Of the pygmies, the Puk-Wudjies.

There they stood, all armed and waiting,

Hurled the pine-cones down upon him, 100  
Struck him on his brawny shoulders,  
On his crown defenceless struck him.  
'Death to Kwasind!' was the sudden  
War-cry of the Little People.

And he sideways swayed and tumbled,  
Sideways fell into the river,  
Plunged beneath the sluggish water  
Headlong, as an otter plunges;  
And the birch canoe, abandoned,  
Drifted empty down the river, 110  
Bottom upward swerved and drifted:  
Nothing more was seen of Kwasind.

But the memory of the Strong Man  
Lingered long among the people,  
And whenever through the forest  
Raged and roared the wintry tempest,  
And the branches, tossed and troubled,  
Creaked and groaned and split asunder,  
'Kwasind!' cried they; 'that is Kwasind!  
He is gathering in his fire-wood!' 120

## XIX

### THE GHOSTS

NEVER stoops the soaring vulture  
On his quarry in the desert,  
On the sick or wounded bison,  
But another vulture, watching  
From his high aerial look-out,  
Sees the downward plunge, and follows;  
And a third pursues the second,  
Coming from the invisible ether,  
First a speck, and then a vulture,  
Till the air is dark with pinions. 10

So disasters come not singly;  
But as if they watched and waited,  
Scanning one another's motions,  
When the first descends, the others  
Follow, follow, gathering flock-wise  
Round their victim, sick and wounded,  
First a shadow, then a sorrow,  
Till the air is dark with anguish.

Now, o'er all the dreary North-land, 20  
Mighty Peboan, the Winter,  
Breathing on the lakes and rivers,  
Into stone had changed their waters.  
From his hair he shook the snow-flakes,  
Till the plains were strewn with whiteness,  
One uninterrupted level,  
As if, stooping, the Creator  
With his hand had smoothed them over.  
Through the forest, wide and wailing,

Roamed the hunter on his snow-shoes;  
In the village worked the women, 30  
Pounded maize, or dressed the deer-skin;  
And the young men played together  
On the ice the noisy ball-play,  
On the plain the dance of snow-shoes.

One dark evening, after sundown,  
In her wigwam Laughing Water  
Sat with old Nokomis, waiting  
For the steps of Hiawatha  
Homeward from the hunt returning.

On their faces gleamed the firelight, 40  
Painting them with streaks of crimson,  
In the eyes of old Nokomis  
Glimmered like the watery moonlight,  
In the eyes of Laughing Water  
Glistened like the sun in water;  
And behind them crouched their shadows  
In the corners of the wigwam,  
And the smoke in wreaths above them  
Climbed and crowded through the smoke-  
flue.

Then the curtain of the doorway 50  
From without was slowly lifted;  
Brighter glowed the fire a moment,  
And a moment swerved the smoke-wreath  
As two women entered softly,  
Passed the doorway uninvited,  
Without word of salutation,  
Without sign of recognition,  
Sat down in the farthest corner,  
Crouching low among the shadows.

From their aspect and their garments, 60  
Strangers seemed they in the village;  
Very pale and haggard were they,  
As they sat there sad and silent,  
Trembling, cowering with the shadows.

Was it the wind above the smoke-flue,  
Muttering down into the wigwam?  
Was it the owl, the Koko-koho,  
Hooting from the dismal forest?  
Sure a voice said in the silence:  
'These are corpses clad in garments, 70  
These are ghosts that come to haunt you,  
From the kingdom of Ponemah,  
From the land of the Hereafter!'

Homeward now came Hiawatha  
From his hunting in the forest,  
With the snow upon his tresses,  
And the red deer on his shoulders.  
At the feet of Laughing Water  
Down he threw his lifeless burden;  
Nobler, handsomer she thought him, 80  
Than when first he came to woo her,  
First threw down the deer before her,

As a token of his wishes,  
As a promise of the future.

Then he turned and saw the strangers,  
Cowering, crouching with the shadows;  
Said within himself, 'Who are they?  
What strange guests has Minnehaha?'  
But he questioned not the strangers,  
Only spake to bid them welcome  
To his lodge, his food, his fireside.

When the evening meal was ready,  
And the deer had been divided,  
Both the pallid guests, the strangers,  
Springing from among the shadows,  
Seized upon the choicest portions,  
Seized the white fat of the roebuck,  
Set apart for Laughing Water,  
For the wife of Hiawatha;  
Without asking, without thanking,  
Eagerly devoured the morsels,  
Flitted back among the shadows  
In the corner of the wigwam.

Not a word spake Hiawatha,  
Not a motion made Nokomis,  
Not a gesture Laughing Water;  
Not a change came o'er their features;  
Only Minnehaha softly  
Whispered, saying, 'They are famished;  
Let them do what best delights them;  
Let them eat, for they are famished.'

Many a daylight dawned and darkened,  
Many a night shook off the daylight  
As the pine shakes off the snow-flakes  
From the midnight of its branches;  
Day by day the guests unmoving  
Sat there silent in the wigwam;  
But by night, in storm or starlight,  
Forth they went into the forest,  
Bringing fire-wood to the wigwam,  
Bringing pine-cones for the burning,  
Always sad and always silent.

And whenever Hiawatha  
Came from fishing or from hunting,  
When the evening meal was ready,  
And the food had been divided,  
Gliding from their darksome corner,  
Came the pallid guests, the strangers,  
Seized upon the choicest portions  
Set aside for Laughing Water,  
And without rebuke or question  
Flitted back among the shadows.

Never once had Hiawatha  
By a word or look reproved them;  
Never once had old Nokomis  
Made a gesture of impatience;  
Never once had Laughing Water

Shown resentment at the outrage.

All had they endured in silence,  
That the rights of guest and stranger,  
That the virtue of free-giving,  
By a look might not be lessened,  
By a word might not be broken.

Once at midnight Hiawatha,  
Ever wakeful, ever watchful,  
In the wigwam, dimly lighted  
By the brands that still were burning,  
By the glimmering, flickering firelight,  
Heard a sighing, oft repeated,  
Heard a sobbing, as of sorrow.

From his couch rose Hiawatha,  
From his shaggy hides of bison,  
Pushed aside the deer-skin curtain,  
Saw the pallid guests, the shadows,  
Sitting upright on their couches,  
Weeping in the silent midnight.

And he said: 'O guests! why is it  
That your hearts are so afflicted,  
That you sob so in the midnight?  
Has perchance the old Nokomis,  
Has my wife, my Minnehaha,  
Wronged or grieved you by unkindness,  
Failed in hospitable duties?'

Then the shadows ceased from weeping,  
Ceased from sobbing and lamenting,  
And they said, with gentle voices:  
'We are ghosts of the departed,  
Souls of those who once were with you.  
From the realms of Chibiabos  
Hither have we come to try you,  
Hither have we come to warn you.'

'Cries of grief and lamentation  
Reach us in the Blessed Islands;  
Cries of anguish from the living,  
Calling back their friends departed,  
Sadden us with useless sorrow.  
Therefore have we come to try you;  
No one knows us, no one heeds us.  
We are but a burden to you,  
And we see that the departed  
Have no place among the living.'

'Think of this, O Hiawatha!  
Speak of it to all the people,  
That henceforward and forever  
They no more with lamentations  
Sadden the souls of the departed  
In the Islands of the Blessed.

'Do not lay such heavy burdens  
In the graves of those you bury,  
Not such weight of furs and wampum,  
Not such weight of pots and kettles,  
For the spirits faint beneath them.'

Only give them food to carry,  
Only give them fire to light them.

'Four days is the spirit's journey  
To the land of ghosts and shadows,  
Four its lonely night encampments;  
Four times must their fires be lighted.  
Therefore, when the dead are buried,  
Let a fire, as night approaches,  
Four times on the grave be kindled,  
That the soul upon its journey  
May not lack the cheerful firelight,  
May not grope about in darkness.

'Farewell, noble Hiawatha!  
We have put you to the trial,  
To the proof have put your patience,  
By the insult of our presence,  
By the outrage of our actions.  
We have found you great and noble.  
Fail not in the greater trial,  
Faint not in the harder struggle.'

When they ceased, a sudden dark-  
ness

Fell and filled the silent wigwam.  
Hiawatha heard a rustle  
As of garments trailing by him,  
Heard the curtain of the doorway  
Lifted by a hand he saw not,  
Felt the cold breath of the night air,  
For a moment saw the starlight;  
But he saw the ghosts no longer,  
Saw no more the wandering spirits  
From the kingdom of Ponemah,  
From the land of the Hereafter.

## XX

### THE FAMINE

OH, the long and dreary Winter!  
Oh, the cold and cruel Winter!  
Ever thicker, thicker, thicker  
Froze the ice on lake and river,  
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper  
Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,  
Fell the covering snow, and drifted  
Through the forest, round the village.

Hardly from his buried wigwam  
Could the hunter force a passage;  
With his mittens and his snow-shoes  
Vainly walked he through the forest,  
Sought for bird or beast and found none,  
Saw no track of deer or rabbit,  
In the snow beheld no footprints,  
In the ghastly, gleaming forest

Fell, and could not rise from weakness,  
Perished there from cold and hunger.

Oh the famine and the fever!  
Oh the wasting of the famine!  
Oh the blasting of the fever!  
Oh the wailing of the children!  
Oh the anguish of the women!

All the earth was sick and famished;  
Hungry was the air around them,  
Hungry was the sky above them,  
And the hungry stars in heaven  
Like the eyes of wolves glared at them!

Into Hiawatha's wigwam  
Came two other guests, as silent  
As the ghosts were, and as gloomy,  
Waited not to be invited,  
Did not parley at the doorway,  
Sat there without word of welcome  
In the seat of Laughing Water;  
Looked with haggard eyes and hollow  
At the face of Laughing Water.

And the foremost said: 'Behold me!  
I am Famine, Bukadawin!'  
And the other said: 'Behold me!  
I am Fever, Ahkosewin!'

And the lovely Minnehaha  
Shuddered as they looked upon her,  
Shuddered at the words they uttered,  
Lay down on her bed in silence,  
Hid her face, but made no answer;  
Lay there trembling, freezing, burning  
At the looks they cast upon her,  
At the fearful words they uttered.

Forth into the empty forest  
Rushed the maddened Hiawatha;  
In his heart was deadly sorrow,  
In his face a stony firmness;  
On his brow the sweat of anguish  
Started, but it froze and fell not.

Wrapped in furs and armed for hunt-  
ing,  
With his mighty bow of ash-tree,  
With his quiver full of arrows,  
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,  
Into the vast and vacant forest  
On his snow-shoes strode he forward.

'Gitche Manito, the Mighty!'  
Cried he with his face uplifted  
In that bitter hour of anguish,  
'Give your children food, O father!  
Give us food, or we must perish!  
Give me food for Minnehaha,  
For my dying Minnehaha!'

Through the far-resounding forest,  
Through the forest vast and vacant

Rang that cry of desolation,  
But there came no other answer  
Than the echo of his crying,  
Than the echo of the woodlands,  
'Minnehaha! Minnehaha!'

All day long roved Hiawatha  
In that melancholy forest,  
Through the shadow of whose thickets,  
In the pleasant days of Summer,  
Of that ne'er forgotten Summer, 80  
He had brought his young wife home-  
ward

From the land of the Dacotahs;  
When the birds sang in the thickets,  
And the streamlets laughed and glistened,  
And the air was full of fragrance,  
And the lovely Laughing Water  
Said with voice that did not tremble,  
'I will follow you, my husband!'

In the wigwam with Nokomis,  
With those gloomy guests that watched  
her, 90  
With the Famine and the Fever,  
She was lying, the Beloved,  
She, the dying Minnehaha.

'Hark!' she said; 'I hear a rushing,  
Hear a roaring and a rushing,  
Hear the Falls of Minnehaha  
Calling to me from a distance!'

'No, my child!' said old Nokomis,  
'T is the night-wind in the pine-trees!'

'Look!' she said; 'I see my father 100  
Standing lonely at his doorway,  
Beckoning to me from his wigwam  
In the land of the Dacotahs!'

'No, my child!' said old Nokomis,  
'T is the smoke, that waves and beckons!'

'Ah!' said she, 'the eyes of Panguk  
Glare upon me in the darkness,  
I can feel his icy fingers  
Clasping mine amid the darkness!  
Hiawatha! Hiawatha!' 110

And the desolate Hiawatha,  
Far away amid the forest,  
Miles away among the mountains,  
Heard that sudden cry of anguish,  
Heard the voice of Minnehaha  
Calling to him in the darkness,  
'Hiawatha! Hiawatha!'

Over snow-fields waste and pathless,  
Under snow-encumbered branches,  
Homeward hurried Hiawatha, 120  
Empty-handed, heavy-hearted,  
Heard Nokomis moaning, wailing:  
'Wahonowin! Wahonowin!

Would that I had perished for you,  
Would that I were dead as you are!  
'Wahonowin! Wahonowin!'

And he rushed into the wigwam,  
Saw the old Nokomis slowly  
Rocking to and fro and moaning,  
Saw his lovely Minnehaha 130  
Lying dead and cold before him,  
And his bursting heart within him  
Uttered such a cry of anguish,  
That the forest moaned and shuddered,  
That the very stars in heaven  
Shook and trembled with his anguish.

Then he sat down, still and speech-  
less,

On the bed of Minnehaha,  
At the feet of Laughing Water,  
At those willing feet, that never 140  
More would lightly run to meet him,  
Never more would lightly follow.

With both hands his face he covered,  
Seven long days and nights he sat there,  
As if in a swoon he sat there,  
Speechless, motionless, unconscious  
Of the daylight or the darkness.

Then they buried Minnehaha;  
In the snow a grave they made her,  
In the forest deep and darksome, 150  
Underneath the moaning hemlocks;  
Clothed her in her richest garments,  
Wrapped her in her robes of ermine,  
Covered her with snow, like ermine;  
Thus they buried Minnehaha.

And at night a fire was lighted,  
On her grave four times was kindled,  
For her soul upon its journey  
To the Islands of the Blessed.

From his doorway Hiawatha 160  
Saw it burning in the forest,  
Lighting up the gloomy hemlocks;  
From his sleepless bed uprising,  
From the bed of Minnehaha,  
Stood and watched it at the doorway,  
That it might not be extinguished,  
Might not leave her in the darkness.

'Farewell!' said he, 'Minnehaha!  
Farewell, O my Laughing Water!  
All my heart is buried with you, 170  
All my thoughts go onward with you!  
Come not back again to labor,  
Come not back again to suffer,  
Where the Famine and the Fever  
Wear the heart and waste the body.  
Soon my task will be completed,  
Soon your footsteps I shall follow



To the Islands of the Blessed,  
To the Kingdom of Ponemah,  
To the Land of the Hereafter !' 180

## XXI

## THE WHITE MAN'S FOOT

In his lodge beside a river,  
Close beside a frozen river,  
Sat an old man, sad and lonely.  
White his hair was as a snow-drift;  
Dull and low his fire was burning,  
And the old man shook and trembled,  
Folded in his Waubewyon,  
In his tattered white-skin-wrapper,  
Hearing nothing but the tempest  
As it roared along the forest, 10  
Seeing nothing but the snow-storm,  
As it whirled and hissed and drifted.

All the coals were white with ashes,  
And the fire was slowly dying,  
As a young man, walking lightly,  
At the open doorway entered.  
Red with blood of youth his cheeks were,  
Soft his eyes, as stars in Spring-time,  
Bound his forehead was with grasses;  
Bound and plumed with scented grasses, 20  
On his lips a smile of beauty,  
Filling all the lodge with sunshine,  
In his hand a bunch of blossoms  
Filling all the lodge with sweetness.

'Ah, my son !' exclaimed the old man,  
'Happy are my eyes to see you.  
Sit here on the mat beside me,  
Sit here by the dying embers,  
Let us pass the night together,  
Tell me of your strange adventures, 30  
Of the lands where you have travelled;  
I will tell you of my prowess,  
Of my many deeds of wonder.'

From his pouch he drew his peace-pipe,  
Very old and strangely fashioned;  
Made of red stone was the pipe-head,  
And the stem a reed with feathers;  
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,  
Placed a burning coal upon it,  
Gave it to his guest, the stranger, 40  
And began to speak in this wise:

'When I blow my breath about me,  
When I breathe upon the landscape,  
Motionless are all the rivers,  
Hard as stone becomes the water !'

And the young man answered, smiling:

'When I blow my breath about me,  
When I breathe upon the landscape,  
Flowers spring up o'er all the meadows,  
Singing, onward rush the rivers !' 50

'When I shake my hoary tresses,'  
Said the old man darkly frowning,  
'All the land with snow is covered;  
All the leaves from all the branches  
Fall and fade and die and wither,  
For I breathe, and lo ! they are not.  
From the waters and the marshes  
Rise the wild goose and the heron,  
Fly away to distant regions,  
For I speak, and lo ! they are not. 60  
And where'er my footsteps wander,  
All the wild beasts of the forest  
Hide themselves in holes and caverns,  
And the earth becomes as flintstone !'

'When I shake my flowing ringlets,'  
Said the young man, softly laughing,  
'Showers of rain fall warm and welcome,  
Plants lift up their heads rejoicing,  
Back into their lakes and marshes  
Come the wild goose and the heron, 70  
Homeward shoots the arrowy swallow,  
Sing the bluebird and the robin,  
And where'er my footsteps wander,  
All the meadows wave with blossoms,  
All the woodlands ring with music,  
All the trees are dark with foliage !'

While they spake, the night departed:  
From the distant realms of Wabun,  
From his shining lodge of silver,  
Like a warrior robed and painted, 80  
Came the sun, and said, 'Behold me  
Gheezis, the great sun, behold me !'

Then the old man's tongue was speechless  
And the air grew warm and pleasant,  
And upon the wigwam sweetly  
Sang the bluebird and the robin,  
And the stream began to murmur,  
And a scent of growing grasses  
Through the lodge was gently wafted.

And Segwun, the youthful stranger, 90  
More distinctly in the daylight  
Saw the icy face before him;  
It was Peboan, the Winter !

From his eyes the tears were flowing,  
As from melting lakes the streamlets,  
And his body shrunk and dwindled  
As the shouting sun ascended,  
Till into the air it faded,  
Till into the ground it vanished,  
And the young man saw before him, 100  
On the hearth-stone of the wigwam,



Where the fire had smoked and smouldered,  
Saw the earliest flower of Spring-time,  
Saw the Beauty of the Spring-time,  
Saw the Miskodeed in blossom.

Thus it was that in the North-land  
After that unheard-of coldness,  
That intolerable Winter,  
Came the Spring with all its splendor,  
All its birds and all its blossoms, 110  
All its flowers and leaves and grasses.

Sailing on the wind to northward,  
Flying in great flocks, like arrows,  
Like huge arrows shot through heaven,  
Passed the swan, the Mahnahbezee,  
Speaking almost as a man speaks;  
And in long lines waving, bending  
Like a bow-string snapped asunder,  
Came the white goose, Waw-be-wawa;  
And in pairs, or singly flying, 120  
Mahng the loon, with clangorous pinions,  
The blue heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
And the grouse, the Mushkodasa.

In the thickets and the meadows  
Piped the bluebird, the Owaissa,  
On the summit of the lodges  
Sang the robin, the Opechee,  
In the covert of the pine-trees  
Cooed the pigeon, the Omemee;  
And the sorrowing Hiawatha, 130  
Speechless in his infinite sorrow,  
Heard their voices calling to him,  
Went forth from his gloomy doorway,  
Stood and gazed into the heaven,  
Gazed upon the earth and waters.

From his wanderings far to eastward,  
From the regions of the morning,  
From the shining land of Wabun,  
Homeward now returned Iagoo,  
The great traveller, the great boaster, 140  
Full of new and strange adventures,  
Marvels many and many wonders.

And the people of the village  
Listened to him as he told them  
Of his marvellous adventures,  
Laughing answered him in this wise:  
'Ugh! it is indeed Iagoo!  
No one else beholds such wonders!'

He had seen, he said, a water  
Bigger than the Big-Sea-Water, 150  
Broader than the Gitche Gumee,  
Bitter so that none could drink it!  
At each other looked the warriors,  
Looked the women at each other,  
Smiled, and said, 'It cannot be so!  
Kaw!' they said, 'it cannot be so!'

'O'er it,' said he, 'o'er this water  
Came a great canoe with pinions,  
A canoe with wings came flying,  
Bigger than a grove of pine-trees, 160  
'Taller than the tallest tree-tops!'

And the old men and the women  
Looked and tittered at each other;  
'Kaw!' they said, 'we don't believe it!'

From its mouth, he said, to greet him,  
Came Waywassimo, the lightning,  
Came the thunder, Annemeekee!

And the warriors and the women  
Laughed aloud at poor Iagoo;  
'Kaw!' they said, 'what tales you tell  
us!' 170

'In it,' said he, 'came a people,  
In the great canoe with pinions  
Came, he said, a hundred warriors;  
Painted white were all their faces  
And with hair their chins were covered!'  
And the warriors and the women  
Laughed and shouted in derision,  
Like the ravens on the tree-tops,  
Like the crows upon the hemlocks.

'Kaw!' they said, 'what lies you tell  
us!' 180

Do not think that we believe them!'

Only Hiawatha laughed not,  
But he gravely spake and answered  
To their jeering and their jesting:

'True is all Iagoo tells us;  
I have seen it in a vision,  
Seen the great canoe with pinions,  
Seen the people with white faces,  
Seen the coming of this bearded  
People of the wooden vessel 190  
From the regions of the morning,  
From the shining lands of Wabun.

'Gitche Manito, the Mighty,  
The Great Spirit, the Creator,  
Sends them hither on his errand,  
Sends them to us with his message.  
Wheresoe'er they move, before them  
Swarms the stinging fly, the Ahmo,  
Swarms the bee, the honey-maker;  
Wheresoe'er they tread, beneath them 200  
Springs a flower unknown among us,  
Springs the White-man's Foot in blossom.

'Let us welcome, then, the strangers,  
Hail them as our friends and brothers,  
And the heart's right hand of friendship  
Give them when they come to see us.  
Gitche Manito, the Mighty,  
Said this to me in my vision.

'I beheld, too, in that vision

All the secrets of the future,  
 Of the distant days that shall be. 210  
 I beheld the westward marches  
 Of the unknown, crowded nations.  
 All the land was full of people,  
 Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,  
 Speaking many tongues, yet feeling  
 But one heart-beat in their bosoms.  
 In the woodlands rang their axes,  
 Smoked their towns in all the valleys,  
 Over all the lakes and rivers 220  
 Rushed their great canoes of thunder.

'Then a darker, drearier vision  
 Passed before me, vague and cloud-like;  
 I beheld our nation scattered,  
 All forgetful of my counsels,  
 Weakened, warring with each other:  
 Saw the remnants of our people  
 Sweeping westward, wild and woful,  
 Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,  
 Like the withered leaves of Autumn!' 230

## XXII

## HIAWATHA'S DEPARTURE

By the shore of Gitche Gumees,  
 By the shining Big-Sea-Water,  
 At the doorway of his wigwam,  
 In the pleasant summer morning,  
 Hiawatha stood and waited.  
 All the air was full of freshness,  
 All the earth was bright and joyous,  
 And before him, through the sunshine,  
 Westward toward the neighboring forest  
 Passed in golden swarms the Ahmo, 240  
 Passed the bees, the honey-makers,  
 Burning, singing in the sunshine.

Bright above him shone the heavens,  
 Level spread the lake before him;  
 From its bosom leaped the sturgeon,  
 Sparkling, flashing in the sunshine;  
 On its margin the great forest  
 Stood reflected in the water,  
 Every tree-top had its shadow,  
 Motionless beneath the water. 250

From the brow of Hiawatha  
 Gone was every trace of sorrow,  
 As the fog from off the water,  
 As the mist from off the meadow.  
 With a smile of joy and triumph,  
 With a look of exultation,  
 As of one who in a vision  
 Sees what is to be, but is not,  
 Stood and waited Hiawatha.

Toward the sun his hands were lifted,<sup>1</sup> 26  
 Both the palms spread out against it,  
 And between the parted fingers  
 Fell the sunshine on his features,  
 Flecked with light his naked shoulders,  
 As it falls and flecks an oak-tree  
 Through the rifted leaves and branches.

O'er the water floating, flying,  
 Something in the hazy distance,  
 Something in the mists of morning,  
 Loomed and lifted from the water, 27  
 Now seemed floating, now seemed flying,  
 Coming nearer, nearer, nearer.

Was it Shingebis the diver?  
 Or the pelican, the Shada?  
 Or the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah?  
 Or the white goose, Waw-be-wawa,  
 With the water dripping, flashing,  
 From its glossy neck and feathers?

It was neither goose nor diver,  
 Neither pelican nor heron, 28  
 O'er the water floating, flying,  
 Through the shining mist of morning,  
 But a birch canoe with paddles,  
 Rising, sinking on the water,  
 Dripping, flashing in the sunshine;  
 And within it came a people  
 From the distant land of Wabun,  
 From the farthest realms of morning  
 Came the Black-Robe chief, the Prophet,  
 He the Priest of Prayer, the Pale-face, 29  
 With his guides and his companions.

And the noble Hiawatha,  
 With his hands aloft extended,  
 Held aloft in sign of welcome,  
 Waited, full of exultation,  
 Till the birch canoe with paddles  
 Grated on the shining pebbles,  
 Stranded on the sandy margin,  
 Till the Black-Robe chief, the Pale-face,  
 With the cross upon his bosom, 30  
 Landed on the sandy margin.

Then the joyous Hiawatha  
 Cried aloud and spake in this wise:  
 'Beautiful is the sun, O strangers,  
 When you come so far to see us!  
 All our town in peace awaits you,  
 All our doors stand open for you;  
 You shall enter all our wigwams,  
 For the heart's right hand we give you.

'Never bloomed the earth so gayly, 31  
 Never shone the sun so brightly,

<sup>1</sup> In this manner, and with such salutations, was Father Marquette received by the Illinois. See his *Voyages et Découvertes*, section v. (LONGFELLOW.)

As to-day they shine and blossom  
 When you come so far to see us !  
 Never was our lake so tranquil,  
 Nor so free from rocks and sand-bars;  
 For your birch canoe in passing  
 Has removed both rock and sand-bar.

' Never before had our tobacco  
 Such a sweet and pleasant flavor,  
 Never the broad leaves of our cornfields  
 Were so beautiful to look on,  
 As they seem to us this morning,  
 When you come so far to see us ! '

And the Black-Robe chief made answer,

Stammered in his speech a little,  
 Speaking words yet unfamiliar:  
 ' Peace be with you, Hiawatha,  
 Peace be with you and your people,  
 Peace of prayer, and peace of pardon,  
 Peace of Christ, and joy of Mary ! ' 100

Then the generous Hiawatha  
 Led the strangers to his wigwam,  
 Seated them on skins of bison,  
 Seated them on skins of ermine,  
 And the careful old Nokomis  
 Brought them food in bowls of basswood,  
 Water brought in birchen dippers,  
 And the calumet, the peace-pipe,  
 Filled and lighted for their smoking.

All the old men of the village, 110  
 All the warriors of the nation,  
 All the Jossakeeds, the Prophets,  
 The magicians, the Wabenos,  
 And the Medicine-men, the Medas,  
 Came to bid the strangers welcome;  
 ' It is well,' they said, ' O brothers,  
 That you come so far to see us ! '

In a circle round the doorway,  
 With their pipes they sat in silence,  
 Waiting to behold the strangers, 120  
 Waiting to receive their message;  
 Till the Black-Robe chief, the Pale-face,  
 From the wigwam came to greet them,  
 Stammering in his speech a little,  
 Speaking words yet unfamiliar;  
 ' It is well,' they said, ' O brother,  
 That you come so far to see us ! '

Then the Black-Robe chief, the Prophet,  
 Told his message to the people,  
 Told the purport of his mission, 130  
 Told them of the Virgin Mary,  
 And her blessed Son, the Saviour,  
 How in distant lands and ages  
 He had lived on earth as we do;  
 How he fasted, prayed, and labored;

How the Jews, the tribe accursed,  
 Mocked him, scourged him, crucified him;  
 How he rose from where they laid him,  
 Walked again with his disciples,  
 And ascended into heaven. 140

And the chiefs made answer, saying:

' We have listened to your message,  
 We have heard your words of wisdom,  
 We will think on what you tell us.  
 It is well for us, O brothers,  
 That you come so far to see us ! '  
 Then they rose up and departed  
 Each one homeward to his wigwam,  
 To the young men and the women  
 Told the story of the strangers 150  
 Whom the Master of Life had sent  
 them

From the shining land of Wabun.

Heavy with the heat and silence  
 Grew the afternoon of summer;  
 With a drowsy sound the forest  
 Whispered round the sultry wigwam,  
 With a sound of sleep the water  
 Rippled on the beach below it;  
 From the cornfields shrill and ceaseless  
 Sang the grasshopper, Pah-puk-keena; 160  
 And the guests of Hiawatha,  
 Weary with the heat of Summer,  
 Slumbered in the sultry wigwam.

Slowly o'er the simmering landscape  
 Fell the evening's dusk and coolness,  
 And the long and level sunbeams  
 Shot their spears into the forest,  
 Breaking through its shields of shadow,  
 Rushed into each secret ambush,  
 Searched each thicket, dingle, hollow; 170  
 Still the guests of Hiawatha  
 Slumbered in the silent wigwam.

From his place rose Hiawatha,  
 Bade farewell to old Nokomis,  
 Spoke in whispers, spake in this wise,  
 Did not wake the guests, that slumbered :

' I am going, O Nokomis,  
 On a long and distant journey,  
 To the portals of the Sunset,  
 To the regions of the home-wind, 180  
 Of the Northwest-Wind, Keewaydin.  
 But these guests I leave behind me,  
 In your watch and ward I leave them;  
 See that never harm comes near them,  
 See that never fear molests them,  
 Never danger nor suspicion,  
 Never want of food or shelter,  
 In the lodge of Hiawatha ! '

Forth into the village went he,  
 Bade farewell to all the warriors, 190  
 Bade farewell to all the young men,  
 Spake persuading, spake in this wise:  
 'I am going, O my people,  
 On a long and distant journey;  
 Many moons and many winters  
 Will have come, and will have vanished,  
 Ere I come again to see you.  
 But my guests I leave behind me;  
 Listen to their words of wisdom,  
 Listen to the truth they tell you, 200  
 For the Master of Life has sent them  
 From the land of light and morning !'  
 On the shore stood Hiawatha,  
 Turned and waved his hand at parting;  
 On the clear and luminous water  
 Launched his birch canoe for sailing,  
 From the pebbles of the margin  
 Shoved it forth into the water;  
 Whispered to it, 'Westward ! westward !'  
 And with speed it darted forward. 210  
 And the evening sun descending  
 Set the clouds on fire with redness,  
 Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,  
 Left upon the level water  
 One long track and trail of splendor,  
 Down whose stream, as down a river,  
 Westward, westward, Hiawatha  
 Sailed into the fiery sunset,

Sailed into the purple vapors,  
 Sailed into the dusk of evening. 220  
 And the people from the margin  
 Watched him floating, rising, sinking,  
 Till the birch canoe seemed lifted  
 High into that sea of splendor,  
 Till it sank into the vapors  
 Like the new moon slowly, slowly  
 Sinking in the purple distance.  
 And they said, 'Farewell forever !'  
 Said, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha !'  
 And the forests, dark and lonely, 230  
 Moved through all their depths of darkness,  
 Sighed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha !'  
 And the waves upon the margin  
 Rising, rippling on the pebbles,  
 Sobbed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha !'  
 And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,  
 From her haunts among the fen-lands,  
 Screamed, 'Farewell, O Hiawatha !'  
 Thus departed Hiawatha,  
 Hiawatha the Beloved, 240  
 In the glory of the sunset,  
 In the purple mists of evening,  
 To the regions of the home-wind,  
 Of the Northwest-Wind, Keewaydin,  
 To the Islands of the Blessed,  
 To the Kingdom of Ponemah,  
 To the Land of the Hereafter !  
 June 25, 1854—Mar. 21, 1855. Nov. 1855.

### MY LOST YOUTH

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town<sup>1</sup>  
 That is seated by the sea;  
 Often in thought go up and down  
 The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
 And my youth comes back to me.  
 And a verse of a Lapland song  
 Is haunting my memory still:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

<sup>1</sup> From Longfellow's *Journal*: March 29, 1855—At night as I lie in bed, a poem comes into my mind,—a memory of Portland,—my native town, the city by the sea.

Stede la terra dove nato fui  
 Sulla marina.

March 30—Wrote the poem; and am rather pleased with it, and with the bringing in of the two lines of the old Lapland song,

A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.  
 (*Life*, vol. II., p. 284.)

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees, 10  
 And catch, in sudden gleams,  
 The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
 And islands that were the Hesperides  
 Of all my boyish dreams.  
 And the burden of that old song,  
 It murmurs and whispers still:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

I remember the black wharves and the  
 slips,  
 And the sea-tides tossing free; 20  
 And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
 And the magic of the sea.  
 And the voice of that wayward song  
 Is singing and saying still:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
 And the fort upon the hill;  
 The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar, 30  
 The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,  
 And the bugle wild and shrill.  
 And the music of that old song  
 Throbs in my memory still:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

I remember the sea-fight far away,<sup>1</sup>  
 How it thundered o'er the tide!  
 And the dead captains, as they lay  
 In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay  
 Where they in battle died. 41  
 And the sound of that mournful song  
 Goes through me with a thrill:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
 The shadows of Deering's Woods;  
 And the friendships old and the early loves  
 Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of  
 doves  
 In quiet neighborhoods. 50  
 And the verse of that sweet old song,  
 It flutters and murmurs still:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart  
 Across the school-boy's brain;  
 The song and the silence in the heart,  
 That in part are prophecies, and in part  
 Are longings wild and vain.  
 And the voice of that fitful song 60  
 Sings on, and is never still:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

There are things of which I may not speak;  
 There are dreams that cannot die;

<sup>1</sup> This was the engagement between the *Enterprise* and *Boxer* off the harbor of Portland, in which both captains were slain. They were buried side by side in the cemetery on Mountjoy. (LONGFELLOW.)

The fight took place in 1813. The *Enterprise* was an American brig, the *Boxer*, an English one. The fight, which could be seen from the shore, lasted for three quarters of an hour, when the *Enterprise* came into the harbor, bringing her captive with her. (*Cambridge Edition*.)

There are thoughts that make the strong  
 heart weak,  
 And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
 And a mist before the eye.  
 And the words of that fatal song  
 Come over me like a chill: 70  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
 When I visit the dear old town;  
 But the native air is pure and sweet,  
 And the trees that o'ershadow each well-  
 known street,  
 As they balance up and down,  
 Are singing the beautiful song,  
 Are sighing and whispering still:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will, 80  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.'

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,<sup>2</sup>  
 And with joy that is almost pain  
 My heart goes back to wander there,  
 And among the dreams of the days that were,  
 I find my lost youth again.  
 And the strange and beautiful song,  
 The groves are repeating it still:  
 'A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts.' 90

1855.

(1858.)

## THE FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY OF AGASSIZ<sup>3</sup>

MAY 28, 1857

It was fifty years ago  
 In the pleasant month of May,  
 In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,  
 A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took  
 The child upon her knee,  
 Saying: 'Here is a story-book  
 Thy Father has written for thee.'

<sup>2</sup> See the *Life*, vol. i, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> A dinner was given to Agassiz on his fiftieth birthday, at which Longfellow presided, and poems were read by Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell.

See Longfellow's 'Noel,' and 'Three Friends of Mine,' Lowell's 'Agassiz,' Whittier's 'The Prayer of Agassiz,' Holmes's 'A Farewell to Agassiz' and 'At the Saturday Club,' and T. W. Parsons's Sonnet, 'Agassiz.'

'Come, wander with me,' she said,  
 'Into regions yet untrod;  
 And read what is still unread  
 In the manuscripts of God.' 10

And he wandered away and away  
 With Nature, the dear old nurse,  
 Who sang to him night and day  
 The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,  
 Or his heart began to fail,  
 She would sing a more wonderful song,  
 Or tell a more marvellous tale. 20

So she keeps him still a child,  
 And will not let him go,  
 Though at times his heart beats wild  
 For the beautiful Pays de Vaud;

Though at times he hears in his dreams  
 The Ranz des Vaches of old,  
 And the rush of mountain streams  
 From glaciers clear and cold;

And the mother at home says, 'Hark!  
 For his voice I listen and yearn;  
 It is growing late and dark,  
 And my boy does not return!' 30  
 1857. (1858.)

### DAYBREAK

A WIND came up out of the sea,  
 And said, 'O mists, make room for me.'

It hailed the ships, and cried, 'Sail on,  
 Ye mariners, the night is gone.'

And hurried landward far away,  
 Crying, 'Awake! it is the day.'

It said unto the forest, 'Shout!  
 Hang all your leafy banners out!'

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,  
 And said, 'O bird, awake and sing.' 10

And o'er the farms, 'O chanticleer,  
 Your clarion blow; the day is near.'

It whispered to the fields of corn,  
 'Bow down, and hail the coming morn.'

It shouted through the belfry-tower,  
 'Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour.'

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,  
 And said, 'Not yet! in quiet lie.'  
 1857. (1858.)

### SANTA FILOMENA<sup>1</sup>

WHENE'ER a noble deed is wrought,  
 Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,  
 Our hearts, in glad surprise,  
 To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls  
 Into our inmost being rolls,  
 And lifts us unawares  
 Out of all meaner cares.

Honor to those whose words or deeds  
 Thus help us in our daily needs, 10  
 And by their overflow  
 Raise us from what is low!

Thus thought I, as by night I read  
 Of the great army of the dead,  
 The trenches cold and damp,  
 The starved and frozen camp, —

The wounded from the battle-plain,  
 In dreary hospitals of pain,  
 The cheerless corridors,  
 The cold and stony floors. 20

Lo! in that house of misery  
 A lady with a lamp I see  
 Pass through the glimmering gloom,  
 And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,  
 The speechless sufferer turns to kiss  
 Her shadow, as it falls  
 Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be  
 Opened and then closed suddenly, 30  
 The vision came and went,  
 The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long  
 Hereafter of her speech and song,  
 That light its rays shall cast  
 From portals of the past.

<sup>1</sup> For the legend, see Mrs. Jameson's *Legendary Art* (ii, 298). The modern application you will not miss. In Italian, one may say *Filomela* or *Filomena*. (LONGFELLOW.)

The 'modern application' is to Florence Nightingale.



A Lady with a Lamp shall stand  
In the great history of the land,  
A noble type of good, 40  
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here  
The palm, the lily, and the spear,  
The symbols that of yore  
Saint Filomena bore.

1857.

1857.

## THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH<sup>1</sup>

### I

#### MILES STANDISH

IN the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the  
land of the Pilgrims,  
To and fro in a room of his simple and  
primitive dwelling,  
Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cor-  
dovan leather,  
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish  
the Puritan Captain.  
Buried in thought he seemed, with his  
hands behind him, and pausing  
Ever and anon to behold his glittering  
weapons of warfare,  
Hanging in shining array along the walls  
of the chamber, —  
Cutlass and corselet of steel, and his trusty  
sword of Damascus,  
Curved at the point and inscribed with its  
mystical Arabic sentence,  
While underneath, in a corner, were fowl-  
ing-piece, musket, and matchlock. 10  
Short of stature he was, but strongly built  
and athletic,  
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with  
muscles and sinews of iron;  
Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet  
beard was already  
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges  
sometimes in November.  
Near him was seated John Alden, his friend  
and household companion,  
Writing with diligent speed at a table of  
pine by the window;  
Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon  
complexion,  
Having the dew of his youth, and the  
beauty thereof, as the captives

Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed,  
'Not Angles, but Angels.'  
Youngest of all was he of the men who  
came in the Mayflower. 20

Suddenly breaking the silence, the dili-  
gent scribe interrupting,  
Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles  
Standish the Captain of Plymouth.  
'Look at these arms,' he said, 'the war-  
like weapons that hang here  
Burnished and bright and clean, as if for  
parade or inspection!  
This is the sword of Damascus I fought  
with in Flanders; this breastplate,  
Well I remember the day! once saved my  
life in a skirmish;  
Here in front you can see the very dint of  
the bullet  
Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish  
arcabucero.  
Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgot-  
ten bones of Miles Standish  
Would at this moment be mould, in their  
grave in the Flemish morasses.' 30  
Thereupon answered John Alden, but  
looked not up from his writing:  
'Truly the breath of the Lord hath slack-  
ened the speed of the bullet;  
He in his mercy preserved you, to be our  
shield and our weapon!'  
Still the Captain continued, unheeding the  
words of the stripling:  
'See, how bright they are burnished, as if  
in an arsenal hanging;  
That is because I have done it myself, and  
not left it to others.  
Serve yourself, would you be well served,  
is an excellent adage;  
So I take care of my arms, as you of your  
pens and your inkhorn.  
Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great,  
invincible army,  
Twelve men, all equipped, having each his  
rest and his matchlock, 40

<sup>1</sup> Priscilla's reply to John Alden was a well-known tradition before Longfellow took up the story. Longfellow himself, and also the poet Bryant, were descendants of John and Priscilla Alden. For the details of colonial life, Longfellow followed especially Elliott's *History of New England*, which he read in 1857. (*Life*, vol. II, pp. 328-329.)



Eighteen shillings a month, together with  
 diet and pillage,  
 And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each  
 of my soldiers !'  
 This he said with a smile, that danced in  
 his eyes, as the sunbeams  
 Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish  
 again in a moment.  
 Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the  
 Captain continued:  
 'Look ! you can see from this window my  
 brazen howitzer planted  
 High on the roof of the church, a preacher  
 who speaks to the purpose,  
 Steady, straightforward, and strong, with  
 irresistible logic,  
 Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the  
 hearts of the heathen.  
 Now we are ready, I think, for any assault  
 of the Indians;  
 Let them come, if they like, and the sooner  
 they try it the better, —  
 Let them come, if they like, be it sagamore,  
 sachem, or pow-wow,  
 Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or  
 Tokamahamon !'

Long at the window he stood, and wist-  
 fully gazed on the landscape,  
 Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapory  
 breath of the east-wind,  
 Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-  
 blue rim of the ocean,  
 Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shad-  
 ows and sunshine.  
 Over his countenance flitted a shadow like  
 those on the landscape,  
 Gloom intermingled with light ; and his  
 voice was subdued with emotion,  
 Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause  
 he proceeded :  
 'Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies  
 buried Rose Standish ;  
 Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me  
 by the wayside !  
 She was the first to die of all who came in  
 the Mayflower !  
 Green above her is growing the field of  
 wheat we have sown there,  
 Better to hide from the Indian scouts the  
 graves of our people,  
 Lest they should count them and see how  
 many already have perished !'  
 Sadly his face he averted, and strode up  
 and down, and was thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of  
 books, and among them  
 Prominent three, distinguished alike for  
 bulk and for binding ;  
 Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Com-  
 mentaries of Cæsar  
 Out of the Latin translated by Arthur  
 Goldinge of London,  
 And, as if guarded by these, between them  
 was standing the Bible.  
 Musing a momont before them, Miles  
 Standish paused, as if doubtful  
 Which of the three he should choose for  
 his consolation and comfort,  
 Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the fa-  
 mous campaigns of the Romans,  
 Or the Artillery practice, designed for bel-  
 ligerent Christians.  
 Finally down from its shelf he dragged the  
 ponderous Roman,  
 Seated himself at the window, and opened  
 the book, and in silence  
 Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where  
 thumb-marks thick on the margin,  
 Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the  
 battle was hottest.  
 Nothing was heard in the room but the  
 hurrying pen of the stripling,  
 Busily writing epistles important, to go by  
 the Mayflower,  
 Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day  
 at latest, God willing !  
 Homeward bound with the tidings of all  
 that terrible winter,  
 Letters written by Alden, and full of the  
 name of Priscilla !  
 Full of the name and the fame of the Pu-  
 ritan maiden Priscilla !

## II

## LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

NOTHING was heard in the room but the  
 hurrying pen of the stripling,  
 Or an occasional sigh from the laboring  
 heart of the Captain,  
 Reading the marvellous words and achieve-  
 ments of Julius Cæsar.  
 After a while he exclaimed, as he smote  
 with his hand, palm downwards,  
 Heavily on the page : 'A wonderful man  
 was this Cæsar !  
 You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but  
 here is a fellow

Who could both write and fight, and in both was equally skilful !'  
 Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the comely, the youthful :  
 ' Yea, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his pen and his weapons.  
 Somewhere have I read, but where I forget, he could dictate<sup>10</sup>  
 Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his memoirs.'  
 ' Truly,' continued the Captain, not heeding or hearing the other,  
 ' Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Caesar !  
 Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village,  
 Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right when he said it.  
 Twice was he married before he was twenty, and many times after ;  
 Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand cities he conquered ;  
 He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has recorded ;  
 Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator Brutus !  
 Now, do you know what he did on a certain occasion in Flanders,<sup>20</sup>  
 When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the front giving way too,  
 And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so closely together  
 There was no room for their swords ? Why, he seized a shield from a soldier,  
 Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and commanded the captains,  
 Calling on each by his name, to order forward the ensigns ;  
 Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for their weapons ;  
 So he won the day, the battle of something-or-other.  
 That's what I always say ; if you wish a thing to be well done,  
 You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others !'

All was silent again; the Captain continued his reading,<sup>30</sup>  
 Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling  
 Writing epistles important to go next day by the Mayflower,  
 Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden Priscilla;

Every sentence began or closed with the name of Priscilla,  
 Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the secret,  
 Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the name of Priscilla!  
 Finally closing his book, with a bang of the ponderous cover,  
 Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier grounding his musket,  
 Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish the Captain of Plymouth:  
 ' When you have finished your work, I have something important to tell you.<sup>40</sup>  
 Be not however in haste; I can wait; I shall not be impatient!'  
 Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the last of his letters,  
 Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful attention:  
 ' Speak; for whenever you speak, I am always ready to listen,  
 Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles Standish.'  
 Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed, and culling his phrases:  
 ' 'T is not good for a man to be alone, say the Scriptures.  
 This I have said before, and again and again I repeat it;  
 Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it, and say it.  
 Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary and dreary;<sup>50</sup>  
 Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of friendship;  
 Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden Priscilla.  
 She is alone in the world; her father and mother and brother  
 Died in the winter together; I saw her going and coming,  
 Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed of the dying,  
 Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to myself, that if ever  
 There were angels on earth, as there are angels in heaven,  
 Two have I seen and known; and the angel whose name is Priscilla  
 Holds in my desolate life the place which the other abandoned.  
 Long have I cherished the thought, but never have dared to reveal it,<sup>60</sup>

Being a coward in this, though valiant  
 enough for the most part.  
 Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest  
 maiden of Plymouth,  
 Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of  
 words but of actions,  
 Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and  
 heart of a soldier.  
 Not in these words, you know, but this in  
 short is my meaning;  
 I am a maker of war, and not a maker of  
 phrases.  
 You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in  
 elegant language,  
 Such as you read in your books of the plead-  
 ings and wooings of lovers,  
 Such as you think best adapted to win the  
 heart of a maiden.'

When he had spoken, John Alden, the  
 fair-haired, taciturn stripling, 70  
 All aghast at his words, surprised, embar-  
 rassed, bewildered,  
 Trying to mask his dismay by treating the  
 subject with lightness,  
 Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart  
 stand still in his bosom,  
 Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is  
 stricken by lightning,  
 Thus made answer and spake, or rather  
 stammered than answered:  
 'Such a message as that, I am sure I should  
 mangle and mar it;  
 If you would have it well done, — I am only  
 repeating your maxim, —  
 You must do it yourself, you must not leave  
 it to others !'  
 But with the air of a man whom nothing can  
 turn from his purpose,  
 Gravely shaking his head, made answer the  
 Captain of Plymouth : 80  
 'Truly the maxim is good, and I do not  
 mean to gainsay it;  
 But we must use it discreetly, and not waste  
 powder for nothing.  
 Now, as I said before, I was never a maker  
 of phrases.  
 I can march up to a fortress and summon  
 the place to surrender,  
 But march up to a woman with such a pro-  
 posal, I dare not.  
 I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the  
 mouth of a cannon,  
 But of a thundering "No !" point-blank  
 from the mouth of a woman,

That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I  
 ashamed to confess it !  
 So you must grant my request, for you are  
 an elegant scholar,  
 Having the graces of speech, and skill in the  
 turning of phrases.' 90  
 Taking the hand of his friend, who still was  
 reluctant and doubtful,  
 Holding it long in his own, and pressing it  
 kindly, he added:  
 'Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet  
 deep is the feeling that prompts me;  
 Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the  
 name of our friendship !'  
 Then made answer John Alden: 'The name  
 of friendship is sacred;  
 What you demand in that name, I have not  
 the power to deny you !'  
 So the strong will prevailed, subduing and  
 moulding the gentler,  
 Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden  
 went on his errand.

## III

## THE LOVER'S ERRAND

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden  
 went on his errand,  
 Out of the street of the village, and into the  
 paths of the forest,  
 Into the tranquil woods, where bluebirds  
 and robins were building  
 Towns in the populous trees, with hanging  
 gardens of verdure,  
 Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection  
 and freedom.  
 All around him was calm, but within him  
 commotion and conflict,  
 Love contending with friendship, and self  
 with each generous impulse.  
 To and fro in his breast his thoughts were  
 heaving and dashing,  
 As in a foundering ship, with every roll of  
 the vessel,  
 Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge  
 of the ocean ! 10  
 'Must I relinquish it all,' he cried with a  
 wild lamentation, —  
 'Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope,  
 the illusion ?  
 Was it for this I have loved, and waited,  
 and worshipped in silence ?  
 Was it for this I have followed the flying  
 feet and the shadow

Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores  
 of New England?  
 Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its  
 depths of corruption  
 Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms  
 of passion;  
 Angels of light they seem, but are only de-  
 lusions of Satan.  
 All is clear to me now; I feel it, I see it  
 distinctly!  
 This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon  
 me in anger, 20  
 For I have followed too much the heart's  
 desires and devices,  
 Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious  
 idols of Baal.  
 This is the cross I must bear; the sin and  
 the swift retribution.'

So through the Plymouth woods John  
 Alden went on his errand;  
 Crossing the brook at the ford, where it  
 brawled over pebble and shallow,  
 Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers  
 blooming around him,  
 Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and  
 wonderful sweetness,  
 Children lost in the woods, and covered  
 with leaves in their slumber.  
 'Puritan flowers,' he said, 'and the type of  
 Puritan maidens,  
 Modest and simple and sweet, the very  
 type of Priscilla! 30  
 So I will take them to her; to Priscilla the  
 Mayflower of Plymouth,  
 Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting  
 gift will I take them;  
 Breathing their silent farewells, as they  
 fade and wither and perish,  
 Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of  
 the giver.'  
 So through the Plymouth woods John  
 Alden went on his errand;  
 Came to an open space, and saw the disk of  
 the ocean,  
 Sailless, sombre and cold with the comfort-  
 less breath of the east wind;  
 Saw the new-built house, and people at  
 work in a meadow;  
 Heard, as he drew near the door, the mu-  
 sical voice of Priscilla  
 Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old  
 Puritan anthem, 40  
 Music that Luther sang to the sacred words  
 of the Psalmist,

Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling  
 and comforting many.  
 Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the  
 form of the maiden  
 Seated beside her wheel, and the carded  
 wool like a snow-drift  
 Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding  
 the ravenous spindle,  
 While with her foot on the treadle she  
 guided the wheel in its motion.  
 Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn  
 psalm-book of Ainsworth,  
 Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the  
 music together,  
 Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in  
 the wall of a churchyard,  
 Darkened and overhung by the running  
 vine of the verses. 50  
 Such was the book from whose pages she  
 sang the old Puritan anthem,  
 She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the  
 forest,  
 Making the humble house and the modest  
 apparel of homespun  
 Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with  
 the wealth of her being!  
 Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen  
 and cold and relentless,  
 Thoughts of what might have been, and the  
 weight and woe of his errand;  
 All the dreams that had faded, and all the  
 hopes that had vanished,  
 All his life henceforth a dreary and tenant-  
 less mansion,  
 Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrow-  
 ful faces.  
 Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely  
 he said it, 60  
 'Let not him that putteth his hand to the  
 plough look backwards;  
 Though the ploughshare cut through the  
 flowers of life to its fountains,  
 Though it pass o'er the graves of the dead  
 and the hearths of the living,  
 It is the will of the Lord; and his mercy  
 endureth forever!'

So he entered the house: and the hum of  
 the wheel and the singing  
 Suddenly ceased; for Priscilla, aroused by  
 his step on the threshold,  
 Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand,  
 in signal of welcome,  
 Saying, 'I knew it was you, when I heard  
 your step in the passage;

For I was thinking of you, as I sat there  
 singing and spinning.  
 Awkward and dumb with delight, that a  
 thought of him had been mingled 70  
 Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from  
 the heart of the maiden,  
 Silent before her he stood, and gave her  
 the flowers for an answer,  
 Finding no words for his thought. He re-  
 membered that day in the winter,  
 After the first great snow, when he broke  
 a path from the village,  
 Reeling and plunging along through the  
 drifts that encumbered the doorway,  
 Stamping the snow from his feet as he en-  
 tered the house, and Priscilla  
 Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him  
 a seat by the fireside,  
 Grateful and pleased to know he had  
 thought of her in the snow-storm.  
 Had he but spoken then! perhaps not in  
 vain had he spoken;  
 Now it was all too late; the golden mo-  
 ment had vanished! 80  
 So he stood there abashed, and gave her  
 the flowers for an answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the  
 birds and the beautiful spring-time,  
 Talked of their friends at home, and the  
 Mayflower that sailed on the morrow.  
 'I have been thinking all day,' said gently  
 the Puritan maiden,  
 'Dreaming all night, and thinking all day,  
 of the hedge-rows of England, —  
 They are in blossom now, and the country  
 is all like a garden:  
 Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song  
 of the lark and the linnet,  
 Seeing the village street, and familiar faces  
 of neighbors  
 Going about as of old, and stopping to gos-  
 sip together,  
 And, at the end of the street, the village  
 church, with the ivy 90  
 Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet  
 graves in the churchyard.  
 Kind are the people I live with, and dear  
 to me my religion;  
 Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself  
 back in Old England.  
 You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help  
 it: I almost  
 Wish myself back in Old England, I feel  
 so lonely and wretched.'

Thereupon answered the youth: 'Indeed  
 I do not condemn you;  
 Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed  
 in this terrible winter.  
 Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a  
 stronger to lean on;  
 So I have come to you now, with an offer  
 and proffer of marriage  
 Made by a good man and true, Miles Stan-  
 dish the Captain of Plymouth!' 100

Thus he delivered his message, the dex-  
 terous writer of letters, —  
 Did not embellish the theme, nor array it  
 in beautiful phrases,  
 But came straight to the point, and blurted  
 it out like a school-boy;  
 Even the Captain himself could hardly  
 have said it more bluntly.  
 Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla  
 the Puritan maiden  
 Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated  
 with wonder,  
 Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned  
 her and rendered her speech-  
 less;  
 Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting  
 the ominous silence:  
 'If the great Captain of Plymouth is so  
 very eager to wed me,  
 Why does he not come himself, and take  
 the trouble to woo me? 110  
 If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am  
 not worth the winning!'  
 Then John Alden began explaining and  
 smoothing the matter,  
 Making it worse as he went, by saying the  
 Captain was busy, —  
 Had no time for such things — such things!  
 the words grating harshly  
 Fell on the ear of Priscilla; and swift as a  
 flash she made answer:  
 'Has he no time for such things, as you  
 call it, before he is married,  
 Would he be likely to find it, or make it,  
 after the wedding?  
 That is the way with you men; you don't  
 understand us, you cannot.  
 When you have made up your minds,  
 after thinking of this one and that  
 one,  
 Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing  
 one with another, 120  
 Then you make known your desire, with  
 abrupt and sudden avowal,

And are offended and hurt, and indignant  
perhaps, that a woman  
Does not respond at once to a love that she  
never suspected,  
Does not attain at a bound the height to  
which you have been climbing.  
This is not right nor just: for surely a  
woman's affection  
Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for  
only the asking.  
When one is truly in love, one not only  
says it, but shows it.  
Had he but waited awhile, had he only  
showed that he loved me,  
Even this Captain of yours — who knows?  
— at last might have won me,  
Old and rough as he is; but now it never  
can happen.' 130

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the  
words of Priscilla,  
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining,  
persuading, expanding;  
Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all  
his battles in Flanders,  
How with the people of God he had chosen  
to suffer affliction;  
How, in return for his zeal, they had made  
him Captain of Plymouth;  
He was a gentleman born, could trace his  
pedigree plainly  
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall,  
in Lancashire, England,  
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grand-  
son of Thurston de Standish;  
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was  
basely defrauded,  
Still bore the family arms, and had for his  
crest a cock argent, 140  
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest  
of the blazon.  
He was a man of honor, of noble and gen-  
erous nature;  
Though he was rough, he was kindly; she  
knew how during the winter  
He had attended the sick, with a hand as  
gentle as woman's;  
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny  
it, and headstrong,  
Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and  
placable always,  
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because  
he was little of stature;  
For he was great of heart, magnanimous,  
courtly, courageous;

Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman  
in England,  
Might be happy and proud to be called the  
wife of Miles Standish! 150

But as he warmed and glowed, in his  
simple and eloquent language,  
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise  
of his rival,  
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes  
overrunning with laughter,  
Said, in a tremulous voice, 'Why don't you  
speak for yourself, John?'

## IV

JOHN ALDEN

INTO the open air John Alden, perplexed  
and bewildered,  
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered  
alone by the sea-side;  
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his  
head to the east-wind,  
Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and  
fever within him.  
Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyp-  
tical splendors,  
Sank the City of God, in the vision of John  
the Apostle,  
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jas-  
per, and sapphire,  
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets  
uplifted  
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel  
who measured the city.

'Welcome, O wind of the East!' he ex-  
claimed in his wild exultation, 10  
'Welcome, O wind of the East, from the  
caves of the misty Atlantic!  
Blowing o'er fields of dulse, and measure-  
less meadows of sea-grass,  
Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottoes  
and gardens of ocean!  
Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning  
forehead, and wrap me  
Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the  
fever within me!'

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was  
moaning and tossing,  
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable  
sands of the sea-shore.



Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of passions contending;  
 Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship wounded and bleeding,  
 Passionate cries of desire, and importunate pleadings of duty !  
 'Is it my fault,' he said, 'that the maiden has chosen between us ?'  
 Is it my fault that he failed, — my fault that I am the victor ?'  
 Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of the Prophet:  
 'It hath displeased the Lord !' — and he thought of David's transgression,  
 Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the battle !  
 Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and self-condemnation,  
 Overwhelmed him at once; and he cried in the deepest contrition:  
 'It hath displeased the Lord ! It is the temptation of Satan !'

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea, and beheld there  
 Dimly the shadowy form of the Mayflower riding at anchor,  
 Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the morrow;  
 Heard the voices of men through the mist, the rattle of cordage  
 Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and the sailors' 'Ay, ay, Sir !'  
 Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping air of the twilight.  
 Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and stared at the vessel,  
 Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a phantom,  
 Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the beckoning shadow.  
 'Yes, it is plain to me now,' he murmured; 'the hand of the Lord is  
 Leading me out of the land of darkness, the bondage of error,  
 Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its waters around me,  
 Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel thoughts that pursue me.  
 Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land will abandon,  
 Her whom I may not love, and him whom my heart has offended.  
 Better to be in my grave in the green old churchyard in England,

Close by my mother's side, and among the dust of my kindred;  
 Better be dead and forgotten, than living in shame and dishonor;  
 Sacred and safe and unseen, in the dark of the narrow chamber  
 With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel that glimmers  
 Bright on the hand that is dust, in the chambers of silence and darkness, —  
 Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal hereafter !'

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of his strong resolution,  
 Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along in the twilight,  
 Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent and sombre,  
 Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plymouth,  
 Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the evening.  
 Soon he entered his door, and found the redoubtable Captain  
 Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial pages of Cæsar,  
 Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or Brabant or Flanders.  
 'Long have you been on your errand,' he said with a cheery demeanor,  
 Even as one who is waiting an answer, and fears not the issue.  
 'Not far off is the house, although the woods are between us;  
 But you have lingered so long, that while you were going and coming  
 I have fought ten battles and sacked and demolished a city.  
 Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all that has happened.'

Then John Alden spake, and related the wondrous adventure,  
 From beginning to end, minutely, just as it happened;  
 How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had sped in his courtship,  
 Only smoothing a little, and softening down her refusal.  
 But when he came at length to the words Priscilla had spoken,  
 Words so tender and cruel: 'Why don't you speak for yourself, John ?'



Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and  
 stamped on the floor, till his armor  
 Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a  
 sound of sinister omen.  
 All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sud-  
 den explosion,  
 E'en as a hand-grenade, that scatters de-  
 struction around it.  
 Wildly he shouted, and loud: 'John Alden!  
 you have betrayed me!  
 Me, Miles Standish, your friend! have  
 supplanted, defrauded, betrayed me!  
 One of my ancestors ran his sword through  
 the heart of Wat Tyler;  
 Who shall prevent me from running my  
 own through the heart of a traitor?  
 Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a  
 treason to friendship!  
 You, who lived under my roof, whom I  
 cherished and loved as a brother; so  
 You, who have fed at my board, and drunk  
 at my cup, to whose keeping  
 I have intrusted my honor, my thoughts the  
 most sacred and secret, —  
 You too, Brutus! ah woe to the name of  
 friendship hereafter!  
 Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were  
 mine, but henceforward  
 Let there be nothing between us save war,  
 and implacable hatred!'

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and  
 strode about in the chamber,  
 Chafing and choking with rage; like cords  
 were the veins on his temples.  
 But in the midst of his anger a man ap-  
 peared at the doorway,  
 Bringing in uttermost haste a message of  
 urgent importance,  
 Rumors of danger and war and hostile in-  
 cursions of Indians!  
 Straightway the Captain paused, and, with-  
 out further question or parley,  
 Took from the nail on the wall his sword  
 with its scabbard of iron,  
 Buckled the belt round his waist, and,  
 frowning fiercely, departed.  
 Alden was left alone. He heard the clank  
 of the scabbard  
 Growing fainter and fainter, and dying  
 away in the distance.  
 Then he arose from his seat, and looked  
 forth into the darkness,  
 Felt the cool air blow on his cheek that  
 was hot with the insult,

Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding  
 his hands as in childhood,  
 Prayed in the silence of night to the Father  
 who seeth in secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode  
 wrathful away to the council,  
 Found it already assembled, impatiently  
 waiting his coming;  
 Men in the middle of life, austere and grave  
 in deportment,  
 Only one of them old, the hill that was  
 nearest to heaven,  
 Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent  
 Elder of Plymouth.  
 God had sifted three kingdoms to find the  
 wheat for his planting,  
 Then had sifted the wheat, as the living  
 seed of a nation;  
 So say the chronicles old, and such is the  
 faith of the people!  
 Near them was standing an Indian, in atti-  
 tude stern and defiant,  
 Naked down to the waist, and grim and  
 ferocious in aspect;  
 While on the table before them was lying  
 unopened a Bible,  
 Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded,  
 printed in Holland,  
 And beside it outstretched the skin of a  
 rattlesnake glittered,  
 Filled, like a quiver, with arrows; a signal  
 and challenge of warfare,  
 Brought by the Indian, and speaking with  
 arrowy tongues of defiance.  
 This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered,  
 and heard them debating  
 What were an answer befitting the hostile  
 message and menace,  
 Talking of this and of that, contriving, sug-  
 gesting, objecting;  
 One voice only for peace, and that the  
 voice of the Elder,  
 Judging it wise and well that some at least  
 were converted,  
 Rather than any were slain, for this was  
 but Christian behavior!  
 Then out spake Miles Standish, the stal-  
 wart Captain of Plymouth,  
 Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice  
 was husky with anger,  
 'What! do you mean to make war with  
 milk and the water of roses?  
 Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your  
 howitzer planted

There on the roof of the church, or is it to  
shoot red devils?  
Truly the only tongue that is understood  
by a savage  
Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from  
the mouth of the cannon!  
Thereupon answered and said the excellent  
Elder of Plymouth,  
Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this ir-  
reverent language;  
'Not so thought St. Paul, nor yet the other  
Apostles; <sup>130</sup>  
Not from the cannon's mouth were the  
tongues of fire they spake with!  
But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the  
Captain,  
Who had advanced to the table, and thus  
continued discoursing:  
'Leave this matter to me, for to me by  
right it pertaineth.  
War is a terrible trade; but in the cause  
that is righteous,  
Sweet is the smell of powder; and thus I  
answer the challenge!'

Then from the rattlesnake's skin, with a  
sudden, contemptuous gesture,  
Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with  
powder and bullets  
Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to  
the savage,  
Saying, in thundering tones: 'Here, take  
it! this is your answer!' <sup>140</sup>  
Silently out of the room then glided the  
glistening savage,  
Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming  
himself like a serpent,  
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the  
depths of the forest.

## V

## THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

JUST in the gray of the dawn, as the mists  
uprose from the meadows,  
There was a stir and a sound in the slum-  
bering village of Plymouth;  
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order  
imperative, 'Forward!'  
Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet,  
and then silence.  
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out  
of the village.

Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of  
his valorous army,  
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok,  
friend of the white men,  
Northward marching to quell the sudden  
revolt of the savage.  
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the  
mighty men of King David;  
Giants in heart they were, who believed in  
God and the Bible, —  
Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midian-  
ites and Philistines.  
Over them gleamed far off the crimson  
banners of morning;  
Under them loud on the sands, the serried  
billows, advancing,  
Fired along the line, and in regular order  
retreated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at  
length the village of Plymouth  
Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on  
its manifold labors.  
Sweet was the air and soft; and slowly the  
smoke from the chimneys  
Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed  
steadily eastward;  
Men came forth from the doors, and paused  
and talked of the weather,  
Said that the wind had changed, and was  
blowing fair for the Mayflower; <sup>20</sup>  
Talked of their Captain's departure, and  
all the dangers that menaced,  
He being gone, the town, and what should  
be done in his absence.  
Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices  
of women  
Consecrated with hymns the common cares  
of the household.  
Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows  
rejoiced at his coming;  
Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops  
of the mountains;  
Beautiful on the sails of the Mayflower rid-  
ing at anchor,  
Battered and blackened and worn by all  
the storms of the winter.  
Loosely against her masts was hanging and  
flapping her canvas,  
Rent by so many gales, and patched by the  
hands of the sailors. <sup>30</sup>  
Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over  
the ocean,  
Darted a puff of smoke, and floated sea-  
ward; anon rang

Loud over field and forest the cannon's  
 roar, and the echoes  
 Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-  
 gun of departure !  
 Ah ! but with louder echoes replied the  
 hearts of the people !  
 Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was  
 read from the Bible,  
 Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in  
 fervent entreaty !  
 Then from their houses in haste came forth  
 the Pilgrims of Plymouth,  
 Men and women and children, all hurrying  
 down to the sea-shore,  
 Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to  
 the Mayflower, 40  
 Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving  
 them here in the desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All  
 night he had lain without slumber,  
 Turning and tossing about in the heat and  
 unrest of his fever.  
 He had beheld Miles Standish, who came  
 back late from the council,  
 Stalking into the room, and heard him mut-  
 ter and murmur;  
 Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and some-  
 times it sounded like swearing.  
 Once he had come to the bed, and stood  
 there a moment in silence;  
 Then he had turned away, and said: 'I will  
 not awake him;  
 Let him sleep on, it is best; for what is the  
 use of more talking !'  
 Then he extinguished the light, and threw  
 himself down on his pallet, 50  
 Dressed as he was, and ready to start at  
 the break of the morning, —  
 Covered himself with the cloak he had worn  
 in his campaigns in Flanders, —  
 Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac,  
 ready for action.  
 But with the dawn he arose; in the twilight  
 Alden beheld him  
 Put on his corselet of steel, and all the rest  
 of his armor,  
 Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of  
 Damascus,  
 Take from the corner his musket, and so  
 stride out of the chamber.  
 Often the heart of the youth had burned  
 and yearned to embrace him,  
 Often his lips had essayed to speak, im-  
 ploring for pardon;

All the old friendship came back, with its  
 tender and grateful emotions; 60  
 But his pride overmastered the nobler na-  
 ture within him, —  
 Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the  
 burning fire of the insult.  
 So he beheld his friend departing in anger,  
 but spake not,  
 Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to  
 death, and he spake not !  
 Then he arose from his bed, and heard  
 what the people were saying,  
 Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen  
 and Richard and Gilbert,  
 Joined in the morning prayer, and in the  
 reading of Scripture,  
 And, with the others, in haste went hurrying  
 down to the sea-shore,  
 Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been  
 to their feet as a doorstep  
 Into a world unknown, — the corner-stone  
 of a nation ! 70

There with his boat was the Master, al-  
 ready a little impatient  
 Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind  
 might shift to the eastward,  
 Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an  
 odor of ocean about him,  
 Speaking with this one and that, and cram-  
 ming letters and parcels  
 Into his pockets capacious, and messages  
 mingled together  
 Into his narrow brain, till at last he was  
 wholly bewildered.  
 Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot  
 placed on the gunwale,  
 One still firm on the rock, and talking at  
 times with the sailors,  
 Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and  
 eager for starting.  
 He too was eager to go, and thus put an  
 end to his anguish, 80  
 Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter  
 than keel is or canvas,  
 Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost  
 that would rise and pursue him.  
 But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld  
 the form of Priscilla  
 Standing dejected among them, unconscious  
 of all that was passing.  
 Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she di-  
 vined his intention,  
 Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful,  
 imploring, and patient,

That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled from its purpose,  
 As from the verge of a crag, where one step more is destruction.  
 Strange is the heart of man, with its quick, mysterious instincts !  
 Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are moments, <sup>90</sup>  
 Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the wall adamantine !  
 'Here I remain !' he exclaimed, as he looked at the heavens above him,  
 Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered the mist and the madness,  
 Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was staggering headlong.  
 'Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the ether above me,  
 Seems like a hand that is pointing and beckoning over the ocean.  
 There is another hand, that is not so spectral and ghost-like,  
 Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping mine for protection.  
 Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in the ether !  
 Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and daunt me; I heed not <sup>100</sup>  
 Either your warning or menace, or any omen of evil !  
 There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so wholesome,  
 As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is pressed by her footsteps.  
 Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invisible presence  
 Hover around her forever, protecting, supporting her weakness ;  
 Yes ! as my foot was the first that stepped on this rock at the landing,  
 So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last at the leaving !'

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dignified air and important,  
 Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the wind and the weather,  
 Walked about on the sands, and the people crowded around him <sup>110</sup>  
 Saying a few last words, and enforcing his careful remembrance.  
 Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were grasping a tiller,  
 Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved off to his vessel,

Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry and flurry,  
 Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness and sorrow,  
 Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but Gospel !  
 Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell of the pilgrims.  
 O strong hearts and true ! not one went back in the Mayflower !  
 No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to this ploughing !

Soon were heard on board the shouts and songs of the sailors <sup>120</sup>  
 Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the ponderous anchor.  
 Then the yards were braced, and all sails set to the west-wind,  
 Blowing steady and strong; and the Mayflower sailed from the harbor,  
 Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leaving far to the southward  
 Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the First Encounter,  
 Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for the open Atlantic,  
 Borne on the send of the sea, and the swelling hearts of the Pilgrims.

Long in silence they watched the receding sail of the vessel,  
 Much endeared to them all, as something living and human;  
 Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapt in a vision prophetic, <sup>130</sup>  
 Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder of Plymouth  
 Said, 'Let us pray !' and they prayed, and thanked the Lord and took courage.  
 Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the rock, and above them  
 Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of death, and their kindred  
 Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join in the prayer that they uttered.  
 Sun-illuminated and white, on the eastern verge of the ocean  
 Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a graveyard;  
 Buried beneath it lay forever all hope of escaping.  
 Lo ! as they turned to depart, they saw the form of an Indian,

Watching them from the hill; but while  
 they spake with each other, <sup>140</sup>  
 Pointing with outstretched hands, and say-  
 ing, 'Look!' he had vanished.  
 So they returned to their homes; but Alden  
 lingered a little,  
 Musing alone on the shore, and watching  
 the wash of the billows  
 Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle  
 and flash of the sunshine,  
 Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over  
 the waters.

## VI

## PRISCILLA

THUS for a while he stood, and mused by  
 the shore of the ocean,  
 Thinking of many things, and most of all  
 of Priscilla;  
 And as if thought had the power to draw  
 to itself, like the loadstone,  
 Whatsoever it touches, by subtile laws of  
 its nature,  
 Lo! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was  
 standing beside him.

'Are you so much offended, you will not  
 speak to me?' said she.  
 'Am I so much to blame, that yesterday,  
 when you were pleading  
 Warmly the cause of another, my heart,  
 impulsive and wayward,  
 Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful  
 perhaps of decorum?  
 Certainly you can forgive me for speaking  
 so frankly, for saying <sup>10</sup>  
 What I ought not to have said, yet now I  
 can never unsay it;  
 For there are moments in life, when the  
 heart is so full of emotion,  
 That if by chance it be shaken, or into its  
 depths like a pebble  
 Drops some careless word, it overflows, and  
 its secret,  
 Spilt on the ground like water, can never  
 be gathered together.  
 Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard  
 you speak of Miles Standish,  
 Praising his virtues, transforming his very  
 defects into virtues,  
 Praising his courage and strength, and even  
 his fighting in Flanders,

As if by fighting alone you could win the  
 heart of a woman,  
 Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in  
 exalting your hero. <sup>20</sup>  
 Therefore I spake as I did, by an irre-  
 sistible impulse.  
 You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake  
 of the friendship between us,  
 Which is too true and too sacred to be so  
 easily broken!'  
 Thereupon answered John Alden, the  
 scholar, the friend of Miles Stand-  
 ish:  
 'I was not angry with you, with myself  
 alone I was angry,  
 Seeing how badly I managed the matter I  
 had in my keeping.'  
 'No!' interrupted the maiden, with answer  
 prompt and decisive;  
 'No; you were angry with me, for speak-  
 ing so frankly and freely.  
 It was wrong, I acknowledge; for it is the  
 fate of a woman  
 Long to be patient and silent, to wait like  
 a ghost that is speechless, <sup>30</sup>  
 Till some questioning voice dissolves the  
 spell of its silence.  
 Hence is the inner life of so many suffering  
 women  
 Sunless and silent and deep, like subter-  
 ranean rivers  
 Running through caverns of darkness, un-  
 heard, unseen, and unfruitful,  
 Chafing their channels of stone, with end-  
 less and profitless murmurs.'  
 Thereupon answered John Alden, the young-  
 man, the lover of women:  
 'Heaven forbid it, Priscilla; and truly they  
 seem to me always  
 More like the beautiful rivers that watered  
 the garden of Eden,  
 More like the river Euphrates, through  
 deserts of Havilah flowing,  
 Filling the land with delight, and memories  
 sweet of the garden! <sup>40</sup>  
 'Ah, by these words, I can see,' again in-  
 terrupted the maiden,  
 'How very little you prize me, or care for  
 what I am saying.  
 When from the depths of my heart, in pain  
 and with secret misgiving,  
 Frankly I speak to you, asking for sym-  
 pathy only and kindness,  
 Straightway you take up my words, that  
 are plain and direct and in earnest,

Turn them away from their meaning, and  
 answer with flattering phrases.  
 This is not right, is not just, is not true to  
 the best that is in you;  
 For I know and esteem you, and feel that  
 your nature is noble,  
 Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal  
 level.  
 Therefore I value your friendship, and feel  
 it perhaps the more keenly 50  
 If you say aught that implies I am only as  
 one among many,  
 If you make use of those common and com-  
 plimentary phrases  
 Most men think so fine, in dealing and  
 speaking with women,  
 But which women reject as insipid, if not  
 as insulting.'

Mute and amazed was Alden; and lis-  
 tened and looked at Priscilla,  
 Thinking he never had seen her more fair,  
 more divine in her beauty.  
 He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the  
 cause of another,  
 Stood there embarrassed and silent, and  
 seeking in vain for an answer.  
 So the maiden went on, and little divined  
 or imagined  
 What was at work in his heart, that made  
 him so awkward and speechless. 60  
 'Let us, then, be what we are, and speak  
 what we think, and in all things  
 Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sa-  
 cred professions of friendship.  
 It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed  
 to declare it:  
 I have liked to be with you, to see you, to  
 speak with you always.  
 So I was hurt at your words, and a little  
 affronted to hear you  
 Urge me to marry your friend, though he  
 were the Captain Miles Standish.  
 For I must tell you the truth: much more  
 to me is your friendship  
 Than all the love he could give, were he  
 twice the hero you think him.'  
 Then she extended her hand, and Alden,  
 who eagerly grasped it,  
 Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were  
 aching and bleeding so sorely, 70  
 Healed by the touch of that hand, and he  
 said, with a voice full of feeling:  
 'Yes, we must ever be friends; and of all  
 who offer you friendship

Let me be ever the first, the truest, the  
 nearest and dearest!'

Casting a farewell look at the glimmer-  
 ing sail of the Mayflower,  
 Distant, but still in sight, and sinking be-  
 low the horizon,  
 Homeward together they walked, with a  
 strange, indefinite feeling,  
 That all the rest had departed and left  
 them alone in the desert.  
 But, as they went through the fields in  
 the blessing and smile of the sun-  
 shine,  
 Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla  
 said very archly:  
 'Now that our terrible Captain has gone  
 in pursuit of the Indians, 80  
 Where he is happier far than he would be  
 commanding a household,  
 You may speak boldly, and tell me of all  
 that happened between you,  
 When you returned last night, and said  
 how ungrateful you found me.'  
 Thereupon answered John Alden, and told  
 her the whole of the story, —  
 Told her his own despair, and the direful  
 wrath of Miles Standish.  
 Whereat the maiden smiled, and said be-  
 tween laughing and earnest,  
 'He is a little chimney, and heated hot in  
 a moment!'  
 But as he gently rebuked her, and told her  
 how he had suffered, —  
 How he had even determined to sail that  
 day in the Mayflower,  
 And had remained for her sake, on hearing  
 the dangers that threatened, — 90  
 All her manner was changed, and she said  
 with a faltering accent,  
 'Truly I thank you for this: how good  
 you have been to me always!'

Thus, as a pilgrim devout, who toward  
 Jerusalem journeys,  
 Taking three steps in advance, and one  
 reluctantly backward,  
 Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld  
 by pangs of contrition;  
 Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet  
 ever advancing,  
 Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy  
 Land of his longings,  
 Urged by the fervor of love, and withheld  
 by remorseful misgivings.



## VII

## THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

MEANWHILE the stalwart Miles Standish  
 was marching steadily northward,  
 Winding through forest and swamp, and  
 along the trend of the sea-shore,  
 All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of  
 his anger  
 Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous odor of powder  
 Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all  
 the scents of the forest.  
 Silent and moody he went, and much he  
 revolved his discomfort;  
 He who was used to success, and to easy  
 victories always,  
 Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed  
 to scorn by a maiden,  
 Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the  
 friend whom most he had trusted !  
 Ah ! 't was too much to be borne, and he  
 fretted and chafed in his armor ! 10

'I alone am to blame,' he muttered,  
 'for mine was the folly.  
 What has a rough old soldier, grown grim  
 and gray in the harness,  
 Used to the camp and its ways, to do with  
 the wooing of maidens ?  
 'T was but a dream, — let it pass, — let it  
 vanish like so many others !  
 What I thought was a flower, is only a  
 weed, and is worthless;  
 Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw  
 it away, and henceforward  
 Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and  
 wooer of dangers !'  
 Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and discomfort,  
 While he was marching by day or lying at  
 night in the forest,  
 Looking up at the trees, and the constellations beyond them. 20

After a three days' march he came to an  
 Indian encampment  
 Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between  
 the sea and the forest;  
 Women at work by the tents, and warriors,  
 horrid with war-paint,  
 Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking together;  
 Who, when they saw from afar the sudden  
 approach of the white men,

Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and  
 sabre and musket,  
 Straightway leaped to their feet, and two,  
 from among them advancing,  
 Came to parley with Standish, and offer him  
 furs as a present;  
 Friendship was in their looks, but in their  
 hearts there was hatred.  
 Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers,  
 gigantic in stature,  
 Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible<sup>30</sup>  
 Og, king of Bashan;  
 One was Pecksnot named, and the other  
 was called Wattawamat.  
 Round their necks were suspended their  
 knives in scabbards of wampum,  
 Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as  
 sharp as a needle.  
 Other arms had they none, for they were  
 cunning and crafty.  
 'Welcome, English !' they said, — these  
 words they had learned from the  
 traders  
 Touching at times on the coast, to barter  
 and chaffer for peltries.  
 Then in their native tongue they began to  
 parley with Standish,  
 Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok, friend of the white man,  
 Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly  
 for muskets and powder, 40  
 Kept by the white man, they said, concealed, with the plague, in his cellars,  
 Ready to be let loose, and destroy his  
 brother the red man !  
 But when Standish refused, and said he  
 would give them the Bible,  
 Suddenly changing their tone, they began  
 to boast and to bluster.  
 Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride  
 in front of the other,  
 And, with a lofty demeanor, thus vauntingly spake to the Captain:  
 'Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery  
 eyes of the Captain,  
 Angry is he in his heart; but the heart of  
 the brave Wattawamat  
 Is not afraid at the sight. He was not  
 born of a woman,  
 But on a mountain at night, from an oak-tree  
 riven by lightning, 50  
 Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his  
 weapons about him,  
 Shouting, "Who is there here to fight with  
 the brave Wattawamat ?"



Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting the blade on his left hand,  
Held it aloft and displayed a woman's face  
on the handle;  
Saying, with bitter expression and look of sinister meaning:  
'I have another at home, with the face of  
a man on the handle;  
By and by they shall marry; and there  
will be plenty of children!'

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting,  
insulting Miles Standish:  
While with his fingers he patted the knife  
that hung at his bosom,  
Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it back, as he muttered, 60  
'By and by it shall see; it shall eat; ah, ha!  
but shall speak not!  
This is the mighty Captain the white men  
have sent to destroy us!  
He is a little man; let him go and work  
with the women!'

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces  
and figures of Indians  
Peeping and creeping about from bush to  
tree in the forest,  
Feigning to look for game, with arrows set  
on their bow-strings,  
Drawing about him still closer and closer  
the net of their ambush.  
But undaunted he stood, and dissembled  
and treated them smoothly;  
So the old chronicles say, that were writ in  
the days of the fathers.  
But when he heard their defiance, the boast,  
the taunt, and the insult, 70  
All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh  
and of Thurston de Standish,  
Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in  
the veins of his temples.  
Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and,  
snatching his knife from its scabbard,  
Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward, the savage  
Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiend-like fierceness upon it.  
Straight there arose from the forest the  
awful sound of the war-whoop.  
And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling  
wind of December,  
Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of  
feathery arrows.

Then came a clond of smoke, and out of the  
cloud came the lightning,  
Out of the lightning thunder; and death unseen ran before it. 80  
Frightened the savages fled for shelter in  
swamp and in thicket,  
Hotly pursued and beset; but their sachem,  
the brave Wattawamat,  
Fled not; he was dead. Unswerving and  
swift had a bullet  
Passed through his brain, and he fell with  
both hands clutching the greensward,  
Seeming in death to hold back from his foe  
the land of his fathers.

There on the flowers of the meadow the  
warriors lay, and above them,  
Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok,  
friend of the white man.  
Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stalwart Captain of Plymouth:—  
'Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage, his strength, and his stature,—  
Mocked the great Captain, and called him  
a little man; but I see now 90  
Big enough have you been to lay him  
speechless before you!'

Thus the first battle was fought and won  
by the stalwart Miles Standish.  
When the tidings thereof were brought to  
the village of Plymouth,  
And as a trophy of war the head of the  
brave Wattawamat  
Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at  
once was a church and a fortress,  
All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the  
Lord, and took courage.  
Only Priscilla averted her face from this  
spectre of terror,  
Thanking God in her heart that she had not  
married Miles Standish;  
Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming  
home from his battles,  
He should lay claim to her hand, as the  
prize and reward of his valor. 100

## VIII

## THE SPINNING-WHEEL

MONTH after month passed away, and in  
autumn the ships of the merchants  
Came with kindred and friends, with cattle  
and corn for the Pilgrims.

**All** in the village was peace; the men were  
 intent on their labors,  
**Busy** with hewing and building, with gar-  
 den-plot and with merestead,  
**Busy** with breaking the glebe, and mowing  
 the grass in the meadows,  
**Searching** the sea for its fish, and hunting  
 the deer in the forest.  
**All** in the village was peace; but at times  
 the rumor of warfare  
**Filled** the air with alarm, and the appre-  
 hension of danger.  
**Bravely** the stalwart Standish was scouring  
 the land with his forces,  
**Waxing** valiant in fight and defeating the  
 alien armies,  
**Till** his name had become a sound of fear  
 to the nations.  
**Anger** was still in his heart, but at times  
 the remorse and contrition  
**Which** in all noble natures succeed the pas-  
 sionate outbreak,  
**Came** like a rising tide, that encounters the  
 rush of a river,  
**Staying** its current awhile, but making it  
 bitter and brackish.

**Meanwhile** Alden at home had built him  
 a new habitation,  
**Solid**, substantial, of timber rough-hewn  
 from the firs of the forest.  
**Wooden-barred** was the door, and the roof  
 was covered with rushes;  
**Latticed** the windows were, and the win-  
 dow-panes were of paper,  
**Oiled** to admit the light, while wind and  
 rain were excluded.  
**There** too he dug a well, and around it  
 planted an orchard:  
**Still** may be seen to this day some trace of  
 the well and the orchard.  
**Close** to the house was the stall, where, safe  
 and secure from annoyance,  
**Raghorn**, the snow-white bull, that had  
 fallen to Alden's allotment  
**In** the division of cattle, might ruminate in  
 the night-time  
**Over** the pastures he cropped, made frâ-  
 grant by sweet pennyroyal.

**Oft** when his labor was finished, with  
 eager feet would the dreamer  
**Follow** the pathway that ran through  
 the woods to the house of Pris-  
 cilla,

Led by illusions romantic and subtle  
 deceptions of fancy,  
 Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the  
 semblance of friendship.  
 Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned  
 the walls of his dwelling;  
 Ever of her he thought, when he delved  
 in the soil of his garden;  
 Ever of her he thought, when he read in  
 his Bible on Sunday  
 Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is  
 described in the Proverbs, —  
 How the heart of her husband doth safely  
 trust in her always,  
 How all the days of her life she will do him  
 good, and not evil,  
 How she seeketh the wool and the flax and  
 worketh with gladness,  
 How she layeth her hand to the spindle and  
 holdeth the distaff,  
 How she is not afraid of the snow for her-  
 self or her household,  
 Knowing her household are clothed with  
 the scarlet cloth of her weaving!

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon  
 in the Autumn,  
 Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching  
 her dexterous fingers,  
 As if the thread she was spinning were that  
 of his life and his fortune,  
 After a pause in their talk, thus spake to  
 the sound of the spindle.  
 'Truly, Priscilla,' he said, 'when I see  
 you spinning and spinning,  
 Never idle a moment, but thrifty and  
 thoughtful of others,  
 Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly  
 changed in a moment;  
 You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha  
 the Beautiful Spinner.'  
 Here the light foot on the treadle grew  
 swifter and swifter; the spindle  
 Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread  
 snapped short in her fingers;  
 While the impetuous speaker, not heeding  
 the mischief, continued:  
 'You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner,  
 the queen of Helvetia;  
 She whose story I read at a stall in the  
 streets of Southampton,  
 Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o'er  
 valley and meadow and mountain,  
 Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff  
 fixed to her saddle.

She was so thrifty and good, that her name  
 passed into a proverb.  
 So shall it be with your own, when the  
 spinning-wheel shall no longer  
 Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill  
 its chambers with music.  
 Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate  
 how it was in their childhood,  
 Praising the good old times, and the days  
 of Priscilla the spinner !' 60  
 Straight uprose from her wheel the beau-  
 tiful Puritan maiden,  
 Pleased with the praise of her thrift from  
 him whose praise was the sweetest,  
 Drew from the reel on the table a snowy  
 skein of her spinning,  
 Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the  
 flattering phrases of Alden;  
 'Come, you must not be idle; if I am a  
 pattern for housewives,  
 Show yourself equally worthy of being the  
 model of husbands.  
 Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind  
 it, ready for knitting;  
 Then who knows but hereafter, when fash-  
 ions have changed and the manners,  
 Fathers may talk to their sons of the good  
 old times of John Alden !'  
 Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on  
 his hands she adjusted, 70  
 He, sitting awkwardly there, with his arms  
 extended before him,  
 She, standing graceful, erect, and winding  
 the thread from his fingers,  
 Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy man-  
 ner of holding,  
 Sometimes touching his hands, as she dis-  
 entangled expertly  
 Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares — for  
 how could she help it ? —  
 Sending electrical thrills through every  
 nerve in his body.

Lo ! in the midst of this scene, a breath-  
 less messenger entered,  
 Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible  
 news from the village.  
 Yes; Miles Standish was dead ! — an Indian  
 had brought them the tidings, —  
 Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the  
 front of the battle, 80  
 Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the  
 whole of his forces;  
 All the town would be burned, and all the  
 people be murdered !

Such were the tidings of evil that burst on  
 the hearts of the hearers.  
 Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her  
 face looking backward  
 Still at the face of the speaker, her arms  
 uplifted in horror;  
 But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb  
 of the arrow  
 Piercing the heart of his friend had struck  
 his own, and had sundered  
 Once and forever the bonds that held him  
 bound as a captive,  
 Wild with excess of sensation, the awful  
 delight of his freedom,  
 Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious  
 of what he was doing, 90  
 Clasped, almost with a groan, the motion-  
 less form of Priscilla,  
 Pressing her close to his heart, as forever  
 his own, and exclaiming:  
 'Those whom the Lord hath united, let no  
 man put them asunder !'

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and  
 separate sources,  
 Seeing each other afar, as they leap from  
 the rocks, and pursuing  
 Each one its devious path, but drawing  
 nearer and nearer,  
 Rush together at last, at their trysting-place  
 in the forest;  
 So these lives that had run thus far in sep-  
 arate channels,  
 Coming in sight of each other, then swerv-  
 ing and flowing asunder,  
 Parted by barriers strong, but drawing  
 nearer and nearer, 100  
 Rushed together at last, and one was lost  
 in the other.

## IX

## THE WEDDING-DAY

FORTH from the curtain of clouds, from the  
 tent of purple and scarlet,  
 Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in  
 his garments resplendent,  
 Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light,  
 on his forehead,  
 Round the hem of his robe the golden bells  
 and pomegranates.  
 Blessing the world he came, and the bars  
 of vapor beneath him

Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea  
at his feet was a laver !

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla  
the Puritan maiden.  
Friends were assembled together; the Elder  
and Magistrate also  
Graced the scene with their presence, and  
stood like the Law and the Gospel,  
One with the sanction of earth and one with  
the blessing of heaven. 10  
Simple and brief was the wedding, as that  
of Ruth and of Boaz.  
Softly the youth and the maiden repeated  
the words of betrothal,  
Taking each other for husband and wife in  
the Magistrate's presence,  
After the Puritan way, and the laudable  
custom of Holland.  
Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent  
Elder of Plymouth  
Prayed for the hearth and the home, that  
were founded that day in affec-  
tion,  
Speaking of life and of death, and implor-  
ing Divine benedictions.

Lo ! when the service was ended, a form  
appeared on the threshold,  
Clad in armor of steel, a sombre and sor-  
rowful figure !  
Why does the bridegroom start and stare  
at the strange apparition ? 20  
Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her  
face on his shoulder ?  
Is it a phantom of air, — a bodiless, spec-  
tral illusion ?  
Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come  
to forbid the betrothal ?  
Long had it stood there unseen, a guest un-  
invited, unwelcomed;  
Over its clouded eyes there had passed at  
times an expression  
Softening the gloom and revealing the warm  
heart hidden beneath them,  
As when across the sky the driving rack of  
the rain-cloud  
Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the  
sun by its brightness.  
Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its  
lips, but was silent,  
As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting  
intention. 30  
But when were ended the troth and the  
prayer and the last benediction,

Into the room it strode, and the people be-  
held with amazement  
Bodily there in his armor Miles Standish,  
the Captain of Plymouth !  
Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said  
with emotion, ' Forgive me !  
I have been angry and hurt, — too long have  
I cherished the feeling;  
I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank  
God ! it is ended.  
Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in  
the veins of Hugh Standish,  
Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in  
atoning for error.  
Never so much as now was Miles Standish  
the friend of John Alden.'  
Thereupon answered the bridegroom: ' Let  
all be forgotten between us, — 40  
All save the dear old friendship, and that  
shall grow older and dearer !'  
Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing,  
saluted Priscilla,  
Gravely, and after the manner of old-fash-  
ioned gentry in England,  
Something of camp and of court, of town  
and of country, commingled,  
Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly  
lauding her husband.  
Then he said with a smile: ' I should have  
remembered the adage, —  
If you would be well served, you must serve  
yourself; and moreover,  
No man can gather cherries in Kent at the  
season of Christmas !'

Great was the people's amazement, and  
greater yet their rejoicing,  
Thus to behold once more the sunburnt face  
of their Captain, 50  
Whom they had mourned as dead; and they  
gathered and crowded about him,  
Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful  
of bride and of bridegroom,  
Questioning, answering, laughing, and each  
interrupting the other,  
Till the good Captain declared, being quite  
overpowered and bewildered,  
He had rather by far break into an Indian  
encampment,  
Than come again to a wedding to which he  
had not been invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth  
and stood with the bride at the door-  
way,

Breathing the perfumed air of that warm  
and beautiful morning.  
Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely  
and sad in the sunshine,  
Lay extended before them the land of toil  
and privation;  
There were the graves of the dead, and the  
barren waste of the sea-shore,  
There the familiar fields, the groves of  
pine, and the meadows;  
But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed  
as the Garden of Eden,  
Filled with the presence of God, whose  
voice was the sound of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the  
noise and stir of departure,  
Friends coming forth from the house, and  
impatient of longer delaying,  
Each with his plan for the day, and the  
work that was left uncompleted.  
Then from a stall near at hand, amid ex-  
clamations of wonder,  
Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy,  
so proud of Priscilla,  
Brought out his snow-white bull, obeying  
the hand of its master,  
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring  
in its nostrils,  
Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion  
placed for a saddle.  
She should not walk, he said, through  
the dust and heat of the noon-  
day;  
Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod  
along like a peasant.  
Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured  
by the others,

Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot  
in the hand of her husband,  
Gayly, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted  
her palfrey.  
'Nothing is wanting now,' he said with a  
smile, 'but the distaff;  
Then you would be in truth my queen, my  
beautiful Bertha!'

Onward the bridal procession now moved  
to their new habitation,  
Happy husband and wife, and friends con-  
versing together.  
Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they  
crossed the ford in the forest,  
Pleased with the image that passed, like a  
dream of love, through its bosom,  
Tremulous, floating in air, o'er the depths  
of the azure abysses.  
Down through the golden leaves the sun  
was pouring his splendors,  
Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from  
branches above them suspended,  
Mingled their odorous breath with the  
balm of the pine and the fir-tree,  
Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew  
in the valley of Eschol.  
Like a picture it seemed of the primitive,  
pastoral ages,  
Fresh with the youth of the world, and re-  
calling Rebecca and Isaac,  
Old and yet ever new, and simple and  
beautiful always,  
Love immortal and young in the endless  
succession of lovers.  
So through the Plymouth woods passed on-  
ward the bridal procession.

1857-58.

1858.

## THE CHILDREN'S HOUR<sup>1</sup>

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,  
When the night is beginning to lower,

<sup>1</sup> The ideal commentary on this poem is found in a letter of Longfellow's 'To Emily A—,' August 18, 1859:

'Your letter followed me down here by the seaside, where I am passing the summer with my three little girls. The oldest is about your age; but as little girls' ages keep changing every year, I can never remember exactly how old she is, and have to ask her mamma, who has a better memory than I have. Her name is Alice; I never forget that. She is a nice girl, and loves poetry almost as much as you do.

'The second is Edith, with blue eyes and beautiful

Comes a pause in the day's occupations,  
That is known as the Children's Hour.

golden locks which I sometimes call her "nankeen hair" to make her laugh. She is a very busy little woman, and wears gray boots.

'The youngest is Allegra; which, you know, means merry; and she is the merriest little thing you ever saw,—always singing and laughing all over the house. . . .

'I do not say anything about the two boys. They are such noisy fellows it is of no use to talk about them.' (*Life*, vol. ii. pp. 392-93.)

Longfellow and Victor Hugo may perhaps be called the two greatest poets of childhood, and Victor Hugo's letters to his own children are strikingly like the one just quoted.

I hear in the chamber above me  
The patter of little feet,  
The sound of a door that is opened,  
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,  
Descending the broad hall stair, 20  
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,  
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:  
Yet I know by their merry eyes  
They are plotting and planning together  
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,  
A sudden raid from the hall!  
By three doors left unguarded  
They enter my castle wall! 20

They climb up into my turret  
O'er the arms and back of my chair;  
If I try to escape, they surround me;  
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,  
Their arms about me entwine,  
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen  
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,  
Because you have scaled the wall, 30  
Such an old mustache as I am  
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,  
And will not let you depart,  
But put you down into the dungeon  
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,  
Yes, forever and a day,  
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,  
And moulder in dust away! 40

1859.

1860.

### PAUL REVERE'S RIDE<sup>1</sup>

LISTEN, my children, and you shall hear  
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that Mr. Longfellow derived the story from Paul Revere's account of the incident in a letter to Dr. Jeremy Belknap, printed in *Mass. Hist. Coll. V.* Mr. Frothingham, in his *Siege of Boston*, pp. 57-58, gives the story mainly according to a memorandum of Richard Devens, Revere's friend and associate. The publication of Mr. Longfellow's poem called out a protracted discussion both as to the church from which

On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;  
Hardly a man is now alive  
Who remembers that famous day and year.  
He said to his friend, 'If the British march  
By land or sea from the town to-night,  
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch  
Of the North Church tower as a signal  
light, —

One, if by land, and two, if by sea; 20  
And I on the opposite shore will be,  
Ready to ride and spread the alarm  
Through every Middlesex village and farm,  
For the country folk to be up and to arm.'

Then he said, 'Good-night!' and with  
muffled oar  
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,  
Just as the moon rose over the bay,  
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay  
The Somerset, British man-of-war;  
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar 20  
Across the moon like a prison bar,  
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified  
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and  
street,  
Wanders and watches with eager ears,  
Till in the silence around him he hears  
The muster of men at the barrack door,  
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,  
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,  
Marching down to their boats on the shore. 30

the signals were hung, and as to the friend who hung the lanterns. The subject is discussed and authorities cited in *Memorial History of Boston*, III, 101. (*Cambridge Edition*, p. 668.)

'Paul Revere's Ride' is the first story in the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, a series of tales in verse set in a frame-work something like that of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and supposed to be told by a group of friends gathered at the Red-Horse Inn at Sudbury, about twenty miles from Cambridge. The story of Paul Revere is told by the landlord, whose portrait is thus drawn in the 'Prelude': —

d,

n

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Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,

By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,  
To the belfry-chamber overhead,  
And startled the pigeons from their perch  
On the sombre rafters, that round him  
made

Masses and moving shapes of shade, —  
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,  
To the highest window in the wall,  
Where he paused to listen and look down  
A moment on the roofs of the town, 40  
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,  
In their night-encampment on the hill,  
Wrapped in silence so deep and still  
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,  
The watchful night-wind, as it went  
Creeping along from tent to tent,  
And seeming to whisper, 'All is well !'  
A moment only he feels the spell  
Of the place and the hour, and the secret  
dread 50

Of the lonely belfry and the dead;  
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent  
On a shadowy something far away,  
Where the river widens to meet the bay, —  
A line of black that bends and floats  
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,  
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride  
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.  
Now he patted his horse's side, 60  
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,  
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,  
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;  
But mostly he watched with eager search  
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,  
As it rose above the graves on the hill,  
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.  
And lo ! as he looks, on the belfry's height  
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light !  
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he  
turns, 70  
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight  
A second lamp in the belfry burns !

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,  
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,  
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing,  
a spark  
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and  
fleet;

That was all ! And yet, through the gloom  
and the light,  
The fate of a nation was riding that night;  
And the spark struck out by that steed, in  
his flight,  
Kindled the land into flame with its heat. 80

He has left the village and mounted the  
steep,  
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and  
deep,  
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;  
And under the alders that skirt its edge,  
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the  
ledge,  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,  
When he crossed the bridge into Medford  
town.  
He heard the crowing of the cock,  
And the barking of the farmer's dog, 90  
And felt the damp of the river fog,  
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,  
When he galloped into Lexington.  
He saw the gilded weathercock  
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,  
And the meeting-house windows, blank and  
bare,  
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,  
As if they already stood aghast  
At the bloody work they would look  
upon. 100

It was two by the village clock,  
When he came to the bridge in Concord  
town.  
He heard the bleating of the flock,  
And the twitter of birds among the trees,  
And felt the breath of the morning breeze  
Blowing over the meadows brown.  
And one was safe and asleep in his bed  
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,  
Who that day would be lying dead,  
Pierced by a British musket-ball. 110

You know the rest. In the books you have  
read,  
How the British Regulars fired and fled, —  
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,  
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,  
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,  
Then crossing the fields to emerge again



Under the trees at the turn of the road,  
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;  
And so through the night went his cry of  
alarm 120  
To every Middlesex village and farm, —  
A cry of defiance and not of fear,  
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,  
And a word that shall echo forevermore!  
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,  
Through all our history, to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear  
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,  
And the midnight message of Paul  
Revere. 130  
1860. 1860.

### THE CUMBERLAND

At anchor in Hampton Roads we lay,  
On board of the Cumberland, sloop-of-war;  
And at times from the fortress across the  
bay  
The alarum of drums swept past,  
Or a bugle blast  
From the camp on the shore.

Then far away to the south uprose  
A little feather of snow-white smoke,  
And we knew that the iron ship of our foes  
Was steadily steering its course 10  
To try the force  
Of our ribs of oak.

Down upon us heavily runs,  
Silent and sullen, the floating fort;  
Then comes a puff of smoke from her guns,  
And leaps the terrible death,  
With fiery breath,  
From each open port.

We are not idle, but send her straight  
Defiance back in a full broadside! 20  
As hail rebounds from a roof of slate,  
Rebounds our heavier hail  
From each iron scale  
Of the monster's hide.

'Strike your flag!' the rebel cries,  
In his arrogant old plantation strain.  
'Never!' our gallant Morris replies;

'It is better to sink than to yield!'  
And the whole air pealed  
With the cheers of our men. 30

Then, like a kraken huge and black,  
She crushed our ribs in her iron grasp!  
Down went the Cumberland all a wrack,  
With a sudden shudder of death,  
And the cannon's breath  
For her dying gasp.

Next morn, as the sun rose over the bay,  
Still floated our flag at the mainmast head.  
Lord, how beautiful was thy day!  
Every waft of the air 40  
Was a whisper of prayer,  
Or a dirge for the dead.

Ho! brave hearts that went down in the  
seas!  
Ye are at peace in the troubled stream;  
Ho! brave land! with hearts like these,  
Thy flag, that is rent in twain,  
Shall be one again,  
And without a seam!  
1862. 1862.

### THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH<sup>1</sup>

It was the season, when through all the  
land  
The merle and mavis build, and building  
sing  
Those lovely lyrics, written by his hand,  
Whom Saxon Cædmon calls the Blithe-  
heart King;  
When on the boughs the purple buds ex-  
pand,

<sup>1</sup> The last story in *Tales of a Wayside Inn, First Series*, and the only one of those 'tales' which was almost wholly original with Longfellow. There is a slight foundation for it, in the history of the town of Killingworth in Connecticut. The *Cambridge Edition* of Longfellow quotes a letter of Mr. Henry Hull, who, writing from personal recollection, says: —

'The men of the northern part of the town did yearly in the spring choose two leaders, and then the two sides were formed: the side that got beaten should pay the bills. Their special game was the hawk, the owl, the crow, the blackbird, and any other bird supposed to be mischievous to the corn. Some years each side would bring them in by the bushel. This was followed up for only a few years, for the birds began to grow scarce.'

In this poem, for once, Longfellow enters a field peculiarly belonging to Lowell: the half-humorous treatment of New England country life.

Emerson considered it the best of the *Tales*, and called it (perhaps with a little exaggeration!), 'Serene, happy, and immortal as Chaucer.'

The banners of the vanguard of the  
Spring,  
And rivulets, rejoicing, rush and leap,  
And wave their fluttering signals from the  
steep.

The robin and the bluebird, piping loud,  
Filled all the blossoming orchards with  
their glee;  
The sparrows chirped as if they still were  
proud  
Their race in Holy Writ should men-  
tioned be;  
And hungry crows, assembled in a crowd,  
Clamored their piteous prayer incessantly,  
Knowing who hears the ravens cry, and  
said:  
'Give us, O Lord, this day, our daily  
bread!'

Across the Sound the birds of passage  
sailed,  
Speaking some unknown language strange  
and sweet  
Of tropic isle remote, and passing hailed  
The village with the cheers of all their  
fleet;  
Or quarrelling together, laughed and railed  
Like foreign sailors, landed in the street  
Of seaport town, and with outlandish noise  
Of oaths and gibberish frightening girls and  
boys.

Thus came the jocund Spring in Killing-  
worth,  
In fabulous days, some hundred years  
ago;  
And thrifty farmers, as they tilled the  
earth,  
Heard with alarm the cawing of the crow,  
That mingled with the universal mirth,  
Cassandra-like, prognosticating woe;  
They shook their heads, and doomed with  
dreadful words  
To swift destruction the whole race of  
birds.

And a town-meeting was convened straight-  
way  
To set a price upon the guilty heads  
Of these marauders, who, in lieu of pay,  
Levied black-mail upon the garden beds  
And cornfields, and beheld without dismay  
The awful scarecrow, with his fluttering  
shreds;

The skeleton that waited at their feast,  
Whereby their sinful pleasure was in-  
creased.

Then from his house, a temple painted  
white,  
With fluted columns, and a roof of red,  
The Squire came forth, august and splen-  
did sight!  
Slowly descending, with majestic tread,  
Three flights of steps, nor looking left nor  
right,  
Down the long street he walked, as one  
who said,  
'A town that boasts inhabitants like me  
Can have no lack of good society!'

The Parson, too, appeared, a man austere,  
The instinct of whose nature was to kill;  
The wrath of God he preached from year  
to year,  
And read, with fervor, Edwards on the  
Will;  
His favorite pastime was to slay the deer  
In summer on some Adirondac hill;  
E'en now, while walking down the rural  
lane,  
He lopped the wayside lilies with his cane.

From the Academy, whose belfry crowned  
The hill of Science with its vane of brass,  
Came the Preceptor, gazing idly round,  
Now at the clouds, and now at the green  
grass,  
And all absorbed in reveries profound  
Of fair Almira in the upper class,  
Who was, as in a sonnet he had said,  
As pure as water, and as good as bread.

And next the Deacon issued from his door,  
In his voluminous neck-cloth, white as  
snow;  
A suit of sable bombazine he wore;  
His form was ponderous, and his step  
was slow;  
There never was so wise a man before;  
He seemed the incarnate 'Well, I told  
you so!'  
And to perpetuate his great renown  
There was a street named after him in  
town.

These came together in the new town-hall,  
With sundry farmers from the region  
round.

The Squire presided, dignified and tall,  
 His air impressive and his reasoning  
 sound;  
 Ill fared it with the birds, both great and  
 small;  
 Hardly a friend in all that crowd they  
 found,  
 But enemies enough, who every one  
 Charged them with all the crimes beneath  
 the sun. 80

When they had ended, from his place apart  
 Rose the Preceptor, to redress the  
 wrong,  
 And, trembling like a steed before the  
 start,  
 Looked round bewildered on the expect-  
 ant throng;  
 Then thought of fair Almira, and took  
 heart  
 To speak out what was in him, clear and  
 strong,  
 Alike regardless of their smile or frown,  
 And quite determined not to be laughed  
 down.

'Plato, anticipating the Reviewers,  
 From his Republic banished without pity  
 The Poets; in this little town of yours, 91  
 You put to death, by means of a Com-  
 mittee,  
 The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,  
 The street-musicians of the heavenly  
 city,  
 The birds, who make sweet music for us  
 all  
 In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

'The thrush that carols at the dawn of  
 day  
 From the green steeples of the piny  
 wood;  
 The oriole in the elm; the noisy jay,  
 Jargoning like a foreigner at his food;  
 The bluebird balanced on some topmost  
 spray, 101  
 Flooding with melody the neighborhood;  
 Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng  
 That dwell in nests, and have the gift of  
 song.

'You slay them all! and wherefore? for  
 the gain  
 Of a scant handful more or less of  
 wheat,

Or rye, or barley, or some other grain,  
 Scratched up at random by industrious  
 feet,  
 Searching for worm or weevil after rain!  
 Or a few cherries, that are not so sweet  
 As are the songs these uninvited guests 111  
 Sing at their feast with comfortable  
 breasts.

'Do you ne'er think what wondrous beings  
 these?  
 Do you ne'er think who made them, and  
 who taught  
 The dialect they speak, where melodies  
 Alone are the interpreters of thought?  
 Whose household words are songs in many  
 keys,  
 Sweeter than instrument of man e'er  
 caught!  
 Whose habitations in the tree-tops even  
 Are half-way houses on the road to  
 heaven! 120

'Think, every morning when the sun peeps  
 through  
 The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the  
 grove,  
 How jubilant the happy birds renew  
 Their old, melodious madrigals of love!  
 And when you think of this, remember too  
 'Tis always morning somewhere, and  
 above  
 The awakening continents, from shore to  
 shore,  
 Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.

'Think of your woods and orchards with-  
 out birds!  
 Of empty nests that cling to boughs and  
 beams 130  
 As in an idiot's brain remembered words  
 Hang empty 'mid the cobwebs of his  
 dreams!  
 Will bleat of flocks or bellowing of herds  
 Make up for the lost music, when your  
 teams  
 Drag home the stingy harvest, and no  
 more  
 The feathered gleaners follow to your  
 door?

'What! would you rather see the inces-  
 sant stir  
 Of insects in the windrows of the hay,  
 And hear the locust and the grasshopper

Their melancholy hurdy-gurdies play ?<sup>140</sup>  
 Is this more pleasant to you than the whir  
 Of meadow-lark, and her sweet rounde-  
 lay,  
 Or twitter of little field-fares, as you take  
 Your nooning in the shade of bush and  
 brake ?

'You call them thieves and pillagers; but  
 know,  
 They are the wingèd wardens of your  
 farms,  
 Who from the cornfields drive the insidi-  
 ous foe,  
 And from your harvests keep a hundred  
 harms;  
 Even the blackest of them all, the crow,  
 Renders good service as your man-at-  
 arms,<sup>150</sup>  
 Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,  
 And crying havoc on the slug and snail.

'How can I teach your children gentleness,  
 And mercy to the weak, and reverence  
 For Life, which, in its weakness or excess,  
 Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence,  
 Or Death, which, seeming darkness, is no  
 less  
 The selfsame light, although averted  
 hence,  
 When by your laws, your actions, and  
 your speech,<sup>159</sup>  
 You contradict the very things I teach ?'

With this he closed; and through the au-  
 dience went  
 A murmur, like the rustle of dead  
 leaves;  
 The farmers laughed and nodded, and some  
 bent  
 Their yellow heads together like their  
 sheaves;  
 Men have no faith in fine-spun sentiment  
 Who put their trust in bullocks and in  
 beeves.  
 The birds were doomed; and, as the record  
 shows,  
 A bounty offered for the heads of crows.

There was another audience out of reach,  
 Who had no voice nor vote in making  
 laws,<sup>170</sup>  
 But in the papers read his little speech,  
 And crowned his modest temples with  
 applause ;

They made him conscious, each one more  
 than each,  
 He still was victor, vanquished in their  
 cause.

Sweetest of all the applause he won from  
 thee,  
 O fair Almira at the Academy !

And so the dreadful massacre began;  
 O'er fields and orchards, and o'er wood-  
 land crests,  
 The ceaseless fusillade of terror ran.  
 Dead fell the birds, with blood-stains on  
 their breasts,<sup>180</sup>  
 Or wounded crept away from sight of man,  
 While the young died of famine in their  
 nests;  
 A slaughter to be told in groans, not words,  
 The very St. Bartholomew of Birds !

The summer came, and all the birds were  
 dead;

The days were like hot coals; the very  
 ground  
 Was burned to ashes; in the orchards fed  
 Myriads of caterpillars, and around  
 The cultivated fields and garden beds  
 Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and  
 found<sup>190</sup>  
 No foe to check their march, till they had  
 made  
 The land a desert without leaf or shade.

Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the  
 town,  
 Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly  
 Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees  
 spun down

The canker-worms upon the passers-by,  
 Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl, and  
 gown,  
 Who shook them off with just a little  
 cry;  
 They were the terror of each favorite  
 walk,  
 The endless theme of all the village talk.<sup>200</sup>

The farmers grew impatient, but a few  
 Confessed their error, and would not  
 complain,  
 For after all, the best thing one can do  
 When it is raining, is to let it rain.  
 Then they repealed the law, although they  
 knew  
 It would not call the dead to life again;

**A**s school-boys, finding their mistake too late,  
**D**raw a wet sponge across the accusing slate.

**T**hat year in Killingworth the Autumn came

Without the light of his majestic look, <sup>210</sup>  
**T**he wonder of the falling tongues of flame,  
**T**he illumined pages of his Doom's-Day book.

**A** few lost leaves blushed crimson with their shame,

**A**nd drowned themselves despairing in the brook,

**W**hile the wild wind went moaning everywhere,

**L**amenting the dead children of the air !

**B**ut the next spring a stranger sight was seen,

**A** sight that never yet by bard was sung,

**A**s great a wonder as it would have been  
**I**f some dumb animal had found a tongue ! <sup>220</sup>

**A** wagon, overarched with evergreen,

**U**pon whose boughs were wicker cages hung,

**A**ll full of singing birds, came down the street,

**F**illing the air with music wild and sweet.

**F**rom all the country round these birds were brought,

**B**y order of the town, with anxious quest,  
**A**nd, loosened from their wicker prisons, sought

**I**n woods and fields the places they loved best,

**S**inging loud canticles, which many thought  
**W**ere satires to the authorities addressed, <sup>230</sup>

**W**hile others, listening in green lanes, averred

**S**uch lovely music never had been heard !

**B**ut blither still and louder carolled they  
**U**pon the morrow, for they seemed to know

**I**t was the fair Almira's wedding-day,  
**A**nd everywhere, around, above, below,

**W**hen the Preceptor bore his bride away,  
**T**heir songs burst forth in joyous over-

**f**low,

**A**nd a new heaven bent over a new earth  
**A**mid the sunny farms of Killingworth. <sup>240</sup>  
1863. 1863.

## WEARINESS

**O** LITTLE feet ! that such long years  
**M**ust wander on through hopes and fears,  
**M**ust ache and bleed beneath your load;  
**I**, nearer to the wayside inn  
**W**here toil shall cease and rest begin,  
**A**m weary, thinking of your road !

**O** little hands ! that, weak or strong,  
**H**ave still to serve or rule so long,  
**H**ave still so long to give or ask;  
**I**, who so much with book and pen  
**H**ave toiled among my fellow-men,  
**A**m weary, thinking of your task.

**O** little hearts ! that throb and beat  
**W**ith such impatient, feverish heat,  
**S**uch limitless and strong desires;  
**M**ine, that so long has glowed and burned,  
**W**ith passions into ashes turned,  
**N**ow covers and conceals its fires.

**O** little souls ! as pure and white  
**A**nd crystalline as rays of light  
**D**irect from heaven, their source divine;  
**R**efracted through the mist of years,  
**H**ow red my setting sun appears,  
**H**ow lurid looks this soul of mine !  
1863 ? 1863.

## HAWTHORNE<sup>1</sup>

**H**ow beautiful it was, that one bright day  
**I**n the long week of rain !  
**T**hough all its splendor could not chase  
away  
**T**he omnipresent pain.

**T**he lovely town was white with apple-  
blossoms,  
**A**nd the great elms o'erhead  
**D**ark shadows wove on their aerial looms  
**S**hot through with golden thread.

<sup>1</sup> Hawthorne and Longfellow were friends for many years. This poem records the impressions and feelings of the day of Hawthorne's burial, May 23, 1864: 'It was a lovely day; the village all sunshine and blossoms and the song of birds. You cannot imagine anything at once more sad and beautiful. He is buried on a hill-top under the pines.' (See the *Life*, vol. iii, pp. 36, 38, 39; and Mrs. Hawthorne's letter to Longfellow, pp. 40-42.)

Across the meadows, by the gray old manse,  
The historic river flowed :  
I was as one who wanders in a trance,  
Unconscious of his road.

The faces of familiar friends seemed  
strange;  
Their voices I could hear,  
And yet the words they uttered seemed to  
change  
Their meaning to my ear.

For the one face I looked for was not there,  
The one low voice was mute;  
Only an unseen presence filled the air,  
And baffled my pursuit.

Now I look back, and meadow, manse, and  
stream  
Dimly my thought defines;  
I only see — a dream within a dream —  
The hill-top hearsed with pines.

I only hear above his place of rest  
Their tender undertone,  
The infinite longings of a troubled breast,  
The voice so like his own.

There in seclusion and remote from men  
The wizard hand lies cold,  
Which at its topmost speed let fall the pen,  
And left the tale half told.

Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic  
power,  
And the lost clew regain?  
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower  
Unfinished must remain!

1864.

1864.

DIVINA COMMEDIA<sup>1</sup>

## I

OFt have I seen at some cathedral door  
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,

<sup>1</sup> The poet's life and work were interrupted by the tragic death, through fire, of Mrs. Longfellow. What he felt most deeply, he never expressed, and this burden of sorrow is scarcely alluded to in his poetry, except in the first of these sonnets, and in 'The Cross of Snow,' written eighteen years later, and not published till after his death. Unable to write, and unable to live without writing, he took refuge in the work of translating Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which he had begun in 1843, taken up again in 1853, and now continued and completed, finishing the long task in 1867. From 1861 to 1869 he wrote hardly anything else, except some

Lay down his burden, and with reverent  
feet

Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor  
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;  
Far off the noises of the world retreat;  
The loud vociferations of the street  
Become an undistinguishable roar.  
So, as I enter here from day to day,  
And leave my burden at this minster gate,  
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to  
pray,

The tumult of the time disconsolate  
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,  
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

1864.

1864.

## II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these  
towers!

This crowd of statues, in whose folded  
sleeves

Birds build their nests; while canopied with  
leaves

Parvis and portal bloom like 'trellised bow-  
ers,

And the vast minster seems a cross of flow-  
ers!

But fiends and dragons on the gargoyle  
eaves

Watch the dead Christ between the living  
thieves,

And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!  
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,

What exultations trampling on despair,  
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of

wrong,

What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,  
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,

This mediæval miracle of song!

1864.

1865.

## III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom  
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!

fragments needed to complete the first part of *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

During the same years Robert Browning was trying to benumb the intensity of his own sorrow through absorption in the *Ring and the Book*; and Bryant, after the loss of a wife whom he had worshipped, yet whom he scarcely alludes to in his verse (see 'O Fairest of the Rural Maids,' 'The Future Life,' and 'A Lifetime'), took for his task the translation of Homer.

Longfellow's *Journal*, and his letters to Sumner, show also how deeply he felt the life-and-death crisis through which his country was passing in the same years, and to which, also, his verse hardly alludes except for the first of these sonnets.

And strive to make my steps keep pace  
with thine.

The air is filled with some unknown perfume;

The congregation of the dead make room  
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;  
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of  
pine

The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.  
From the confessionals I hear arise  
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,  
And lamentations from the crypts below;  
And then a voice celestial that begins  
With the pathetic words, 'Although your  
sins  
As scarlet be,' and ends with 'as the snow.'  
1865. 1866.

## IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of  
flame,

She stands before thee, who so long ago  
Filled thy young heart with passion and the  
woe

From which thy song and all its splendors  
came;

And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy  
name,

The ice about thy heart melts as the snow  
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow  
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of  
shame.

Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,  
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,  
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;  
Lethe and Eunoë — the remembered dream  
And the forgotten sorrow — bring at last  
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.  
1867. 1867.

## V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze  
With forms of Saints and holy men who  
died,

Here martyred and hereafter glorified;  
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays

Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,

With splendor upon splendor multiplied;  
And Beatrice again at Dante's side  
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of  
praise.

And then the organ sounds, and unseen  
choirs

Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love  
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;  
And the melodious bells among the spires  
O'er all the house-tops and through heaven  
above

Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

1866.

1866.

## VI

O star of morning and of liberty!  
O bringer of the light, whose splendor  
shines

Above the darkness of the Apennines,  
Forerunner of the day that is to be!

The voices of the city and the sea,  
The voices of the mountains and the pines,  
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines  
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!

Thy flame is blown abroad from all the  
heights,

Through all the nations, and a sound is  
heard,

As of a mighty wind, and men devout,  
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,  
In their own language hear the wondrous  
word,

And many are amazed and many doubt.

1866.

1866.

KILLED AT THE FORD<sup>1</sup>

He is dead, the beautiful youth,  
The heart of honor, the tongue of truth,  
He, the life and light of us all,  
Whose voice was blithe as a bugle-call,  
Whom all eyes followed with one consent,  
The cheer of whose laugh, and whose pleasant word,  
Hushed all murmurs of discontent.

Only last night, as we rode along,  
Down the dark of the mountain gap,  
To visit the picket-guard at the ford, 10  
Little dreaming of any mishap,  
He was humming the words of some old  
song:

<sup>1</sup> The poem you speak of was not a record of any one event which came to my knowledge, but of many which came to my imagination. It is an attempt to express something of the inexpressible sympathy which I feel for the death of the young men in the war, which makes my heart bleed whenever I think of it. (LONGFELLOW, in a letter of March 23, 1866.)

Longfellow's oldest son, Charles, was a lieutenant of cavalry in the Army of the Potomac before he was twenty years old. Toward the end of 1863 he was seriously wounded, but recovered. (*Life*, vol. iii, pp. 21, 24-27.)



'Two red roses he had on his cap  
And another he bore at the point of his  
sword.'

Sudden and swift a whistling ball  
Came out of a wood, and the voice was  
still;

Something I heard in the darkness fall,  
And for a moment my blood grew chill;  
I spake in a whisper, as he who speaks  
In a room where some one is lying dead; 20  
But he made no answer to what I said.

We lifted him up to his saddle again,  
And through the mire and the mist and  
the rain

Carried him back to the silent camp,  
And laid him as if asleep on his bed;  
And I saw by the light of the surgeon's  
lamp

Two white roses upon his cheeks,  
And one, just over his heart, blood-red!

And I saw in a vision how far and fleet  
That fatal bullet went speeding forth, 30  
Till it reached a town in the distant North,  
Till it reached a house in a sunny street,  
Till it reached a heart that ceased to beat  
Without a murmur, without a cry;  
And a bell was tolled, in that far-off town,  
For one who had passed from cross to  
crown,  
And the neighbors wondered that she should  
die.

1866.

1866.

### GIOTTO'S TOWER

How many lives, made beautiful and sweet  
By self-devotion and by self-restraint,  
Whose pleasure is to run without complaint  
On unknown errands of the Paraclete,  
Wanting the reverence of unshodden feet,  
Fail of the nimbus which the artists paint  
Around the shining forehead of the saint,  
And are in their completeness incomplete!  
In the old Tuscan town stands Giotto's  
tower,

The lily of Florence blossoming in stone, —  
A vision, a delight, and a desire, —  
The builder's perfect and centennial flower,  
That in the night of ages bloomed alone,  
But wanting still the glory of the spire.

1866.

1866.

### FINALE OF CHRISTUS

SAINT JOHN

SAINT JOHN *wandering over the face of the  
Earth.*

SAINT JOHN :

THE Ages come and go,  
The Centuries pass as Years;  
My hair is white as the snow,  
My feet are weary and slow,  
The earth is wet with my tears!  
The kingdoms crumble, and fall  
Apart, like a ruined wall,  
Or a bank that is undermined  
By a river's ceaseless flow,  
And leave no trace behind! 20  
The world itself is old;  
The portals of Time unfold  
On hinges of iron, that grate  
And groan with the rust and the weight,  
Like the hinges of a gate  
That hath fallen to decay;  
But the evil doth not cease;  
There is war instead of peace,  
Instead of Love there is hate;  
And still I must wander and wait, 30  
Still I must watch and pray,  
Not forgetting in whose sight,  
A thousand years in their flight  
Are as a single day.

The life of man is a gleam  
Of light, that comes and goes  
Like the course of the Holy Stream,  
The cityless river, that flows  
From fountains no one knows,  
Through the Lake of Galilee, 30  
Through forests and level lands,  
Over rocks, and shallows, and sands  
Of a wilderness wild and vast,  
Till it findeth its rest at last  
In the desolate Dead Sea!  
But alas! alas for me  
Nor yet this rest shall be!

What, then! doth Charity fail?  
Is Faith of no avail?  
Is Hope blown out like a light 40  
By a gust of wind in the night?  
The clashing of creeds, and the strife  
Of the many beliefs, that in vain  
Perplex man's heart and brain,  
Are naught but the rustle of leaves,

When the breath of God upheaves  
 The boughs of the Tree of Life,  
 And they subside again !  
 And I remember still  
 The words, and from whom they came,  
 Not he that repeateth the name, 51  
 But he that doeth the will !

And Him evermore I behold  
 Walking in Galilee,  
 Through the cornfield's waving gold,  
 In hamlet, in wood, and in wold,  
 By the shores of the Beautiful Sea.  
 He toucheth the sightless eyes;  
 Before Him the demons flee;  
 To the dead He sayeth: Arise ! 60  
 To the living: Follow me !  
 And that voice still soundeth on  
 From the centuries that are gone,  
 To the centuries that shall be !

From all vain pomps and shows,  
 From the pride that overflows,  
 And the false conceits of men;  
 From all the narrow rules  
 And subtleties of Schools,  
 And the craft of tongue and pen; 70  
 Bewildered in its search,  
 Bewildered with the cry:  
 Lo, here ! lo, there, the Church !  
 Poor, sad Humanity  
 Through all the dust and heat  
 Turns back with bleeding feet,  
 By the weary road it came,  
 Unto the simple thought  
 By the great Master taught,  
 And that remaineth still: 80  
 Not he that repeateth the name,  
 But he that doeth the will !

1871.

1872.

THE HANGING OF THE CRANE<sup>1</sup>

## I

THE lights are out, and gone are all the  
 guests  
 That thronging came with merriment and  
 jests

<sup>1</sup> 'One morning in the spring of 1867,' writes Mr. T. B. Aldrich, 'Mr. Longfellow came to the little home in Pinckney Street [Boston], where we had set up house-keeping in the light of our honeymoon. As we lingered a moment at the dining-room door, Mr. Longfellow turning to me said, "Ah, Mr. Aldrich, your small round table will not always be closed. By and by you will find new young faces clustering about it; as years go

To celebrate the Hanging of the Crane  
 In the new house,—into the night are  
 gone;  
 But still the fire upon the hearth burns on,  
 And I alone remain.

O fortunate, O happy day,  
 When a new household finds its place  
 Among the myriad homes of earth,  
 Like a new star just sprung to birth, 10  
 And rolled on its harmonious way  
 Into the boundless realms of space !

So said the guests in speech and song,  
 As in the chimney, burning bright,  
 We hung the iron crane to-night,  
 And merry was the feast and long.

## II

And now I sit and muse on what may be,  
 And in my vision see, or seem to see,  
 Through floating vapors interfused with  
 light,  
 Shapes indeterminate, that gleam and  
 fade, 20  
 As shadows passing into deeper shade  
 Sink and elude the sight.

For two alone, there in the hall,  
 Is spread the table round and small;  
 Upon the polished silver shine  
 The evening lamps, but, more divine,  
 The light of love shines over all;  
 Of love, that says not mine and thine,  
 But ours, for ours is thine and mine.

They want no guests, to come between 30  
 Their tender glances like a screen,  
 And tell them tales of land and sea,

on, leaf after leaf will be added until the time comes when the young guests will take flight, one by one, to build nests of their own elsewhere. Gradually the long table will shrink to a circle again, leaving two old people sitting there alone together. This is the story of life, the sweet and pathetic poem of the fireside. Make an idyl of it. I give the idea to you." Several months afterward, I received a note from Mr. Longfellow in which he expressed a desire to use this *motif* in case I had done nothing in the matter. The theme was one peculiarly adapted to his sympathetic handling, and out of it grew *The Hanging of the Crane*. Just when the poem was written does not appear, but its first publication was in the *New York Ledger*, March 28, 1874. Mr. Longfellow's old friend, Mr. Samuel Ward, had heard the poem, and offered to secure it for Mr. Robert Bonner, the proprietor of the *Ledger*, 'touched' as he wrote to Mr. Longfellow, 'by your kindness to poor —, and haunted by the idea of increasing handsomely your noble charity fund.' Mr. Bonner paid the poet the sum of three thousand dollars for this poem. (*Cambridge Edition*.)

And whatsoever may betide  
The great, forgotten world outside;  
They want no guests; they needs must be  
Each other's own best company.

## III

The picture fades; as at a village fair  
A showman's views, dissolving into air,  
Again appear transfigured on the screen,  
So in my fancy this; and now once more, 40  
In part transfigured, through the open door  
Appears the selfsame scene.

Seated, I see the two again,  
But not alone; they entertain  
A little angel unaware,  
With face as round as is the moon,  
A royal guest with flaxen hair,  
Who, throned upon his lofty chair,  
Drums on the table with his spoon,  
Then drops it careless on the floor, 50  
To grasp at things unseen before.

Are these celestial manners? these  
The ways that win, the arts that please?  
Ah yes; consider well the guest,  
And whatso'er he does seems best;  
He ruleth by the right divine  
Of helplessness, so lately born  
In purple chambers of the morn,  
As sovereign over thee and thine.  
He speaketh not; and yet there lies 60  
A conversation in his eyes;  
The golden silence of the Greek,  
The gravest wisdom of the wise,  
Not spoken in language, but in looks  
More legible than printed books,  
As if he could but would not speak.  
And now, O monarch absolute,  
Thy power is put to proof; for, lo!  
Resistless, fathomless, and slow,  
The nurse comes rustling like the sea, 70  
And pushes back thy chair and thee,  
And so good night to King Canute.

## IV

As one who walking in a forest sees  
A lovely landscape through the parted  
trees,  
Then sees it not, for boughs that inter-  
vene;  
Or as we see the moon sometimes revealed  
Through drifting clouds, and then again  
concealed,  
So I behold the scene.

There are two guests at table now;  
The king, deposed and older grown, 80  
No longer occupies the throne, —  
The crown is on his sister's brow;  
A Princess from the Fairy Isles,  
The very pattern girl of girls,  
All covered and embowered in curls,  
Rose-tinted from the Isle of Flowers,  
And sailing with soft, silken sails  
From far-off Dreamland into ours.  
Above their bowls with rims of blue  
Four azure eyes of deeper hue 90  
Are looking, dreamy with delight;  
Limpid as planets that emerge  
Above the ocean's rounded verge,  
Soft-shining through the summer night.  
Steadfast thy gaze, yet nothing see  
Beyond the horizon of their bowls;  
Nor care they for the world that rolls  
With all its freight of troubled souls  
Into the days that are to be.

## V

Again the tossing boughs shut out the  
scene, 100  
Again the drifting vapors intervene,  
And the moon's pallid disk is hidden quite;  
And now I see the table wider grown,  
As round a pebble into water thrown  
Dilates a ring of light.

I see the table wider grown,  
I see it garlanded with guests,  
As if fair Ariadne's Crown  
Out of the sky had fallen down;  
Maidens within whose tender breasts 110  
A thousand restless hopes and fears,  
Forth reaching to the coming years,  
Flutter awhile, then quiet lie,  
Like timid birds that fain would fly,  
But do not dare to leave their nests; —  
And youths, who in their strength elate  
Challenge the van and front of fate,  
Eager as champions to be  
In the divine knight-errantry  
Of youth, that travels sea and land 120  
Seeking adventures, or pursues,  
Through cities, and through solitudes  
Frequented by the lyric Muse,  
The phantom with the beckoning hand,  
That still allures and still eludes.  
O sweet illusions of the brain!  
O sudden thrills of fire and frost!  
The world is bright while ye remain,  
And dark and dead when ye are lost!

## VI

The meadow-brook, that seemeth to stand  
still,

Quickens its current as it nears the mill;  
And so the stream of Time that linger-  
eth

In level places, and so dull appears,  
Runs with a swifter current as it nears  
The gloomy mills of Death.

And now, like the magician's scroll,  
That in the owner's keeping shrinks  
With every wish he speaks or thinks,  
Till the last wish consumes the whole,  
The table dwindles, and again  
I see the two alone remain.

The crown of stars is broken in parts;  
Its jewels, brighter than the day,  
Have one by one been stolen away  
To shine in other homes and hearts.  
One is a wanderer now afar  
In Ceylon or in Zanzibar,  
Or sunny regions of Cathay;  
And one is in the boisterous camp  
'Mid clink of arms and horses' tramp,  
And battle's terrible array.

I see the patient mother read,  
With aching heart, of wrecks that float  
Disabled on those seas remote,  
Or of some great heroic deed  
On battle-fields, where thousands bleed  
To lift one hero into fame.  
Anxious she bends her graceful head  
Above these chronicles of pain,  
And trembles with a secret dread  
Lest there among the drowned or slain  
She find the one beloved name.

## VII

After a day of cloud and wind and rain  
Sometimes the setting sun breaks out again,  
And, touching all the darksome woods  
with light,  
Smiles on the fields, until they laugh and  
sing,  
Then like a ruby from the horizon's ring  
Drops down into the night.

What see I now? The night is fair,  
The storm of grief, the clouds of care,  
The wind, the rain, have passed away;  
The lamps are lit, the fires burn bright,  
The house is full of life and light;  
It is the Golden Wedding day.  
The guests come thronging in once more,

Quick footsteps sound along the floor,  
The trooping children crowd the stair,  
And in and out and everywhere  
Flashes along the corridor  
The sunshine of their golden hair.  
On the round table in the hall  
Another Ariadne's Crown  
Out of the sky hath fallen down;  
More than one Monarch of the Moon  
Is drumming with his silver spoon;  
The light of love shines over all.

O fortunate, O happy day!  
The people sing, the people say.  
The ancient bridegroom and the bride,  
Smiling contented and serene  
Upon the blithe, bewildering scene,  
Behold, well pleased, on every side  
Their forms and features multiplied,  
As the reflection of a light  
Between two burnished mirrors gleams,  
Or lamps upon a bridge at night  
Stretch on and on before the sight,  
Till the long vista endless seems.

1873.

1874.

## CHAUCER

AN old man in a lodge within a park;  
The chamber walls depicted all around  
With portraiture of huntsman, hawk, and  
hound,  
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,  
Whose song comes with the sunshine  
through the dark  
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;  
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,  
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.  
He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote  
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age  
Made beautiful with song; and as I read  
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note  
Of lark and linnet, and from every page  
Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery  
mead.

1873.

(1875.)

## SHAKESPEARE

A vision as of crowded city streets,  
With human life in endless overflow;  
Thunder of thoroughfares; trumpets that  
blow

To battle; clamor, in obscure retreats,  
Of sailors landed from their anchored fleets;  
Tolling of bells in turrets, and below  
Voices of children, and bright flowers that  
throw

O'er garden walls their intermingled  
sweets!

This vision comes to me when I unfold  
The volume of the Poet paramount,  
Whom all the Muses loved, not one  
alone;—

Into his hands they put the lyre of gold,  
And, crowned with sacred laurel at their  
fount,

Placed him as Musagetes on their throne.

1873.

(1875.)

### MILTON

I PACE the sounding sea-beach and behold  
How the voluminous billows roll and run,  
Upheaving and subsiding, while the sun  
Shines through their sheeted emerald far  
unrolled,

And the ninth wave, slow gathering fold by  
fold

All its loose-flowing garments into one,  
Plunges upon the shore, and floods the dun  
Pale reach of sands, and changes them to  
gold.

So in majestic cadence rise and fall  
The mighty undulations of thy song,  
O sightless bard, England's Mæonides!  
And ever and anon, high over all  
Uplifted, a ninth wave superb and strong,  
Floods all the soul with its melodious seas.

1873.

(1875.)

### KEATS

THE young Endymion sleeps Endymion's  
sleep;

The shepherd-boy whose tale was left half  
told!

The solemn grove uplifts its shield of gold  
To the red rising moon, and loud and deep  
The nightingale is singing from the steep;  
It is midsummer, but the air is cold;  
Can it be death? Alas, beside the fold  
A shepherd's pipe lies shattered near his  
sheep.

Lo! in the moonlight gleams a marble  
white,

On which I read: 'Here lieth one whose  
name

Was writ in water.'<sup>1</sup> And was this the meed  
Of his sweet singing? Rather let me write:  
'The smoking flax before it burst to flame  
Was quenched by death, and broken the  
bruised reed.'

1873.

(1875.)

### THE SOUND OF THE SEA

THE sea awoke at midnight from its sleep,  
And round the pebbly beaches far and wide  
I heard the first wave of the rising tide  
Rush onward with uninterrupted sweep;

A voice out of the silence of the deep,

A sound mysteriously multiplied

As of a cataract from the mountain's side,

Or roar of winds upon a wooded steep.

So comes to us at times, from the unknown

And inaccessible solitudes of being,

The rushing of the sea-tides of the soul;

And inspirations, that we deem our own,

Are some divine foreshadowing and foresee-  
ing

Of things beyond our reason or control.

1874.

(1875.)

### THREE FRIENDS OF MINE

I

WHEN I remember them, those friends of  
mine,

Who are no longer here, the noble three,

Who half my life were more than friends to  
me,

And whose discourse was like a generous  
wine,

I most of all remember the divine

Something, that shone in them, and made us  
see

The archetypal man, and what might be

The amplitude of Nature's first design.

In vain I stretch my hands to clasp their  
hands;

I cannot find them. Nothing now is left

<sup>1</sup> Keats' epitaph upon himself, inscribed on the simple stone that stands at the head of his grave beside the walls of Rome. Of the many poets' protests against its cutting pathos, perhaps the best is this, by J. E. Spingarn:—

The Star of Fame shines down upon the river,  
And answering, the stream of Life repeats:  
Upon our waters shall be writ forever  
The name of Keats!

But a majestic memory. They mean-  
while

Wander together in Elysian lands,  
Perchance remembering me, who am bereft  
Of their dear presence, and, remembering,  
smile.

II<sup>1</sup>

In Attica thy birthplace should have been,  
On the Ionian Isles, or where the seas  
Encircle in their arms the Cyclades,  
So wholly Greek wast thou in thy serene  
And childlike joy of life, O Philhellene!  
Around thee would have swarmed the Attic  
bees;

Homer had been thy friend, or Socrates,  
And Plato welcomed thee to his demesne.  
For thee old legends breathed historic  
breath;

Thou sawest Poseidon in the purple sea,  
And in the sunset Jason's fleece of gold!  
Oh, what hadst thou to do with cruel Death,  
Who wast so full of life, or Death with  
thee,

That thou shouldst die before thou hadst  
grown old!

III<sup>2</sup>

I stand again on the familiar shore,  
And hear the waves of the distracted sea  
Piteously calling and lamenting thee, 31  
And waiting restless at thy cottage door.  
The rocks, the sea-weed on the ocean  
floor,

The willows in the meadow, and the free  
Wild winds of the Atlantic welcome me;  
Then why shouldst thou be dead, and come  
no more?

Ah, why shouldst thou be dead, when com-  
mon men

Are busy with their trivial affairs,  
Having and holding? Why, when thou  
hadst read

Nature's mysterious manuscript, and then 40  
Wast ready to reveal the truth it bears,  
Why art thou silent? Why shouldst thou  
be dead?

<sup>1</sup> C. C. Felton, for many years professor of Greek at Harvard, and president of the University from 1860 till his death in 1862. See the *Life of Longfellow*, in many passages, but especially vol. iii, pp. 4, 7, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Agassiz was a constant companion of Longfellow's. See note on p. 211, and many passages in the *Life*.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Sumner was lecturer in the Harvard Law School when Longfellow first came to Cambridge, in 1836, and from that time until his death, in 1874, was one of Longfellow's closest friends.

IV<sup>3</sup>

River, that stealest with such silent pace  
Around the City of the Dead,<sup>4</sup> where lies  
A friend who bore thy name, and whom  
these eyes

Shall see no more in his accustomed  
place,

Linger and fold him in thy soft embrace,  
And say good night, for now the western  
skies

Are red with sunset, and gray mists arise  
Like damps that gather on a dead man's  
face.

Good night! good night! as we so oft have  
said

Beneath this roof at midnight, in the days  
That are no more, and shall no more re-  
turn.

Thou hast but taken thy lamp and gone to  
bed;

I stay a little longer, as one stays  
To cover up the embers that still burn.

## V

The doors are all wide open; at the gate  
The blossomed lilacs counterfeit a blaze,  
And seem to warm the air; a dreamy  
haze

Hangs o'er the Brighton meadows like a  
fate,

And on their margin, with sea-tides elate,  
The flooded Charles, as in the happier  
days,

Writes the last letter of his name, and  
stays

His restless steps, as if compelled to wait.  
I also wait; but they will come no more,  
Those friends of mine, whose presence sat-  
isfied

The thirst and hunger of my heart. Ah  
me!

They have forgotten the pathway to my  
door!

Something is gone from nature since they  
died,

And summer is not summer, nor can be. 70  
1874. (1875.)

<sup>4</sup> The River Charles, whose windings 'write the last letter of his name,' flows near the Cemetery of Mount Auburn. There Sumner is buried, on the hillside nearest the river. Longfellow himself and Agassiz, Lowell, Holmes, Pierpont, Willis, and Parsons, and the historians Prescott, Motley, and Parkman now lie buried there also.



MORITURI SALUTAMUS<sup>1</sup>

POEM FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE CLASS OF 1825 IN BOWDOIN  
COLLEGE

Tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis,  
Et fugiunt freno non remorante dies.  
OVID, *Fastorum*, Lib. vi.

'O CÆSAR, we who are about to die  
Salute you!' was the gladiators' cry  
In the arena, standing face to face  
With death and with the Roman populace.

O ye familiar scenes, — ye groves of pine,  
That once were mine and are no longer  
mine, —  
Thou river, widening through the meadows  
green

To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen, —  
Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose  
Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose<sup>10</sup>  
And vanished, — we who are about to die,  
Salute you; earth and air and sea and sky,  
And the Imperial Sun that scatters down  
His sovereign splendors upon grove and  
town.

Ye do not answer us! ye do not hear!  
We are forgotten; and in your austere  
And calm indifference, ye little care  
Whether we come or go, or whence or  
where.

What passing generations fill these halls,  
What passing voices echo from these walls,

<sup>1</sup> In October, 1874, Mr. Longfellow was urged to write a poem for the fiftieth anniversary of the graduation of his college class, to be held the next summer. At first he said that he could not write the poem, so averse was he from occasional poems, but a sudden thought seems to have struck him, very likely upon seeing a representation of Gerome's famous picture, and ten days later he notes in his diary that he had finished the writing.

The painting by Gerome, referred to, represents a Roman arena, where the gladiators, about to engage in mortal combat, salute the emperor, who with a great concourse of people is to witness the scene. Beneath the painting, Gerome, following a popular tradition, wrote the words, *Ave Caesar, Imperator, Morituri te Salutant*: 'Hail, Cæsar, Emperor! those who go to their death salute thee.' The reference to a gladiatorial combat, which these words imply, is doubted by some scholars, who quote ancient authors as using the phrase in connection with the great sea-fight exhibition given by the emperor on Lacus Fucinus. The combatants on that occasion were condemned criminals, who were to fight until one of the sides was slain, unless spared by the mercy of the emperor. (*Riverside Literature Series*.)

Compare Emerson's 'Terminus,' Holmes's 'The Iron Gate,' Whittier's 'To Oliver Wendell Holmes,' etc.

Ye heed not; we are only as the blast,<sup>21</sup>  
A moment heard, and then forever past.

Not so the teachers who in earlier days  
Led our bewildered feet through learning's  
maze;

They answer us — alas! what have I said?  
What greetings come there from the voice-  
less dead?

What salutation, welcome, or reply?  
What pressure from the hands that lifeless  
lie?

They are no longer here; they all are  
gone

Into the land of shadows, — all save one.<sup>30</sup>  
Honor and reverence, and the good repute  
That follows faithful service as its fruit,  
Be unto him, whom living we salute.

The great Italian poet, when he made  
His dreadful journey to the realms of  
shade,

Met there the old instructor of his youth,  
And cried in tones of pity and of ruth:  
'Oh, never from the memory of my heart  
Your dear, paternal image shall depart,  
Who while on earth, ere yet by death sur-  
prised,

Taught me how mortals are immortalized;<sup>40</sup>  
How grateful am I for that patient care  
All my life long my language shall de-  
clare.'<sup>2</sup>

To-day we make the poet's words our own,  
And utter them in plaintive undertone;  
Nor to the living only be they said,  
But to the other living called the dead,  
Whose dear, paternal images appear  
Not wrapped in gloom, but robed in sun-  
shine here;

Whose simple lives, complete and without  
flaw,<sup>50</sup>  
Were part and parcel of great Nature's  
law;

Who said not to their Lord, as if afraid,  
'Here is thy talent in a napkin laid,'  
But labored in their sphere, as men who  
live

In the delight that work alone can give.  
Peace be to them; eternal peace and rest,  
And the fulfilment of the great behest:  
'Ye have been faithful over a few things,  
Over ten cities shall ye reign as kings.'

<sup>2</sup> Dante to Brunetto Latini. *Inferno*, Canto xv, lines 82-87.



And ye who fill the places we once filled, 60  
 And follow in the furrows that we tilled,  
 Young men, whose generous hearts are  
     beating high,  
 We who are old, and are about to die,  
 Salute you; hail you; take your hands in  
     ours,  
 And crown you with our welcome as with  
     flowers!

How beautiful is youth! how bright it  
     gleams

With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!  
 Book of Beginnings, Story without End,  
 Each maid a heroine, and each man a  
     friend!

Aladdin's Lamp, and Fortunatus' Purse, 70  
 That holds the treasures of the universe!  
 All possibilities are in its hands,  
 No danger daunts it, and no foe withstands;  
 In its sublime audacity of faith,  
 'Be thou removed!' it to the mountain  
     saith,  
 And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,  
 Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud!

As ancient Priam at the Scaean gate  
 Sat on the walls of Troy in regal state  
 With the old men, too old and weak to  
     fight, 80  
 Chirping like grasshoppers in their delight  
 To see the embattled hosts, with spear and  
     shield,  
 Of Trojans and Achaians in the field;  
 So from the snowy summits of our years  
 We see you in the plain, as each appears,  
 And question of you; asking, 'Who is he  
 That towers above the others? Which  
     may be  
 Atreides, Menelaus, Odysseus,  
 Ajax the great, or bold Idomeneus?'

Let him not boast who puts his armor on 90  
 As he who puts it off, the battle done.  
 Study yourselves; and most of all note  
     well

Wherein kind Nature meant you to excel.  
 Not every blossom ripens into fruit;  
 Minerva, the inventress of the flute,  
 Flung it aside, when she her face sur-  
     veyed

Distorted in a fountain as she played;  
 The unlucky Marsyas found it, and his  
     fate

Was one to make the bravest hesitate.

Write on your doors the saying wise and  
     old, 100  
 'Be bold! be bold!' and everywhere, 'Be  
     bold;

Be not too bold!' Yet better the excess  
 Than the defect; better the more than less;  
 Better like Hector in the field to die,  
 Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.

And now, my classmates; ye remaining few  
 That number not the half of those we knew,  
 Ye, against whose familiar names not yet  
 The fatal asterisk of death is set,  
 Ye-I salute! The horologe of Time 110  
 Strikes the half-century with a solemn  
     chime,

And summons us together once again,  
 The joy of meeting not unmixed with pain.

Where are the others? Voices from the  
     deep  
 Caverns of darkness answer me: 'They  
     sleep!'

I name no names; instinctively I feel  
 Each at some well-remembered grave will  
     kneel,

And from the inscription wipe the weeds  
     and moss,

For every heart best knoweth its own loss.  
 I see their scattered gravestones gleaming  
     white 120

Through the pale dusk of the impending  
     night;

O'er all alike the impartial sunset throws  
 Its golden lilies mingled with the rose;  
 We give to each a tender thought, and pass  
 Out of the graveyards with their tangled  
     grass,

Unto these scenes frequented by our feet  
 When we were young, and life was fresh  
     and sweet.

What shall I say to you? What can I say  
 Better than silence is? When I survey  
 This throng of faces turned to meet my  
     own, 130

Friendly and fair, and yet to me unknown,  
 Transformed the very landscape seems to  
     be;

It is the same, yet not the same to me.  
 So many memories crowd upon my brain,  
 So many ghosts are in the wooded plain,  
 I fain would steal away, with noiseless  
     tread,

As from a house where some one lieth dead.

I cannot go; — I pause; — I hesitate;  
 My feet reluctant linger at the gate;  
 As one who struggles in a troubled dream <sup>140</sup>  
 To speak and cannot, to myself I seem.

Vanish the dream! Vanish the idle fears!  
 Vanish the rolling mists of fifty years!  
 Whatever time or space may intervene,  
 I will not be a stranger in this scene.  
 Here every doubt, all indecision, ends;  
 Hail, my companions, comrades, classmates,  
 friends!

Ah me! the fifty years since last we met  
 Seem to me fifty folios bound and set  
 By Time, the great transcriber, on his  
 shelves, <sup>150</sup>

Wherein are written the histories of our-  
 selves.

What tragedies, what comedies, are there;  
 What joy and grief, what rapture and de-  
 spair!

What chronicles of triumph and defeat,  
 Of struggle, and temptations, and retreat!  
 What records of regrets, and doubts, and  
 fears!

What pages blotted, blistered by our tears!  
 What lovely landscapes on the margin  
 shine,

What sweet, angelic faces, what divine  
 And holy images of love and trust, <sup>160</sup>  
 Undimmed by age, unsoiled by damp or  
 dust!

Whose hand shall dare to open and explore  
 These volumes, closed and clasped forever-  
 more?

Not mine. With reverential feet I pass;  
 I hear a voice that cries, 'Alas! alas!  
 Whatever hath been written shall remain,  
 Nor be erased nor written o'er again;  
 The unwritten only still belongs to thee:  
 Take heed, and ponder well what that shall  
 be.'

As children frightened by a thunder-cloud  
 Are reassured if some one reads aloud <sup>171</sup>  
 A tale of wonder, with enchantment fraught,  
 Or wild adventure, that diverts their  
 thought,

Let me endeavor with a tale to chase  
 The gathering shadows of the time and  
 place,

And banish what we all too deeply feel  
 Wholly to say, or wholly to conceal.

In mediæval Rome, I know not where,  
 There stood an image with its arm in air,  
 And on its lifted finger, shining clear, <sup>180</sup>  
 A golden ring with the device, 'Strike  
 here!'

Greatly the people wondered, though none  
 guessed

The meaning that these words but half ex-  
 pressed,

Until a learned clerk who at noonday  
 With downcast eyes was passing on his  
 way,

Paused, and observed the spot, and marked  
 it well,

Whereon the shadow of the finger fell;  
 And, coming back at midnight, delved, and  
 found

A secret stairway leading underground.  
 Down this he passed into a spacious hall, <sup>190</sup>

Lit by a flaming jewel on the wall;  
 And opposite, in threatening attitude,  
 With bow and shaft a brazen statue stood.  
 Upon its forehead, like a coronet,  
 Were these mysterious words of menace  
 set:

'That which I am, I am; my fatal aim  
 None can escape, not even yon luminous  
 flame!'

Midway the hall was a fair table placed,  
 With cloth of gold, and golden cups en-  
 chased

With rubies, and the plates and knives  
 were gold, <sup>200</sup>

And gold the bread and viands manifold.  
 Around it, silent, motionless, and sad,  
 Were seated gallant knights in armor clad,  
 And ladies beautiful with plume and zone,  
 But they were stone, their hearts within  
 were stone;

And the vast hall was filled in every part  
 With silent crowds, stony in face and heart.

Long at the scene, bewildered and amazed,  
 The trembling clerk in speechless wonder  
 gazed;

Then from the table, by his greed made  
 bold, <sup>210</sup>

He seized a goblet and a knife of gold,  
 And suddenly from their seats the guests  
 upsprang,

The vaulted ceiling with loud clamors  
 rang,

The archer sped his arrow, at their call,  
 Shattering the lambent jewel on the wall,

And all was dark around and overhead;—  
Stark on the floor the luckless clerk lay  
dead!

The writer of this legend then records  
Its ghostly application in these words:  
The image is the Adversary old, <sup>220</sup>  
Whose beckoning finger points to realms of  
gold;  
Our lusts and passions are the downward  
stair  
That leads the soul from a diviner air;  
The archer, Death; the flaming jewel,  
Life;  
Terrestrial goods, the goblet and the knife;  
The knights and ladies, all whose flesh and  
bone  
By avarice have been hardened into stone;  
The clerk, the scholar whom the love of  
pelf  
Tempt from his books and from his nobler  
self.

The scholar and the world! The endless  
strife, <sup>230</sup>  
The discord in the harmonies of life!  
The love of learning, the sequestered nooks,  
And all the sweet serenity of books;  
The market-place, the eager love of gain,  
Whose aim is vanity, and whose end is  
pain!

But why, you ask me, should this tale be  
told

To men grown old, or who are growing old?  
It is too late! Ah, nothing is too late  
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.  
Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles <sup>240</sup>  
Wrote his grand *Œdipus*, and Simonides  
Bore off the prize of verse from his com-  
peers,

When each had numbered more than four-  
score years,

And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,  
Had but begun his 'Characters of Men.'  
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightin-  
gales,

At sixty wrote the *Canterbury Tales*;  
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,  
Completed *Faust* when eighty years were  
past.

These are indeed exceptions; but they  
show <sup>250</sup>

How far the gulf-stream of our youth may  
flow

Into the arctic regions of our lives,  
Where little else than life itself survives.

As the barometer foretells the storm  
While still the skies are clear, the weather  
warm,

So something in us, as old age draws near,  
Betrays the pressure of the atmosphere.

The nimble mercury, ere we are aware,  
Descends the elastic ladder of the air;

The telltale blood in artery and vein <sup>260</sup>  
Sinks from its higher levels in the brain;

Whatever poet, orator, or sage  
May say of it, old age is still old age.

It is the waning, not the crescent moon;  
The dusk of evening, not the blaze of  
noon;

It is not strength, but weakness; not de-  
sire,

But its surcease; not the fierce heat of fire,  
The burning and consuming element,

But that of ashes and of embers spent,  
In which some living sparks we still dis-  
cern, <sup>270</sup>

Enough to warm, but not enough to burn.

What then? Shall we sit idly down and  
say

The night hath come; it is no longer day?  
The night hath not yet come; we are not  
quite

Cut off from labor by the failing light;  
Something remains for us to do or dare;

Even the oldest tree some fruit may bear;  
Not *Œdipus Coloneus*, or Greek Ode,

Or tales of pilgrims that one morning rode  
Out of the gateway of the Tabard Inn, <sup>280</sup>

But other something, would we but begin;  
For age is opportunity no less

Than youth itself, though in another dress,  
And as the evening twilight fades away

The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day.

1874.

1875.

## THE HERONS OF ELMWOOD<sup>1</sup>

WARM and still is the summer night,  
As here by the river's brink I wander;  
White overhead are the stars, and white  
The glimmering lamps on the hillside  
yonder.

<sup>1</sup> 'Elmwood' was the home of James Russell Lowell, in Cambridge, about a half mile distant from the Longfellow home.

Silent are all the sounds of day;  
 Nothing I hear but the chirp of crickets,  
 And the cry of the herons winging their  
     way  
 O'er the poet's house in the Elmwood  
     thickets.

Call to him, herons, as slowly you pass  
 To your roosts in the haunts of the exiled  
     thrushes, 10  
 Sing him the song of the green morass,  
 And the tides that water the weeds and  
     rushes.

Sing him the mystical Song of the Hern,  
 And the secret that baffles our utmost  
     seeking;  
 For only a sound of lament we discern,  
 And cannot interpret the words you are  
     speaking.

Sing of the air, and the wild delight  
 Of wings that uplift and winds that up-  
     hold you,  
 The joy of freedom, the rapture of flight  
 Through the drift of the floating mists  
     that infold you; 20

Of the landscape lying so far below,  
 With its towns and rivers and desert  
     places;  
 And the splendor of light above, and the  
     glow  
 Of the limitless, blue, ethereal spaces.

Ask him if songs of the Troubadours,  
 Or of Minnesingers in old black-letter,  
 Sound in his ears more sweet than yours,  
 And if yours are not sweeter and wilder  
     and better.

Sing to him, say to him, here at his gate,  
 Where the boughs of the stately elms are  
     meeting, 30  
 Some one hath lingered to meditate,  
 And send him unseen this friendly greet-  
     ing;

That many another hath done the same,  
 Though not by a sound was the silence  
     broken;  
 The surest pledge of a deathless name  
 Is the silent homage of thoughts un-  
     spoken.

1876.

1877.

## IN THE CHURCHYARD AT TARRYTOWN<sup>1</sup>

HERE lies the gentle humorist, who died  
 In the bright Indian Summer of his fame!  
 A simple stone, with but a date and name,  
 Marks his secluded resting-place beside  
 The river that he loved and glorified.  
 Here in the autumn of his days he came,  
 But the dry leaves of life were all aflame  
 With tints that brightened and were multi-  
     plied.

How sweet a life was his; how sweet a death!  
 Living, to wing with mirth the weary hours,  
 Or with romantic tales the heart to cheer;  
 Dying, to leave a memory like the breath  
 Of summers full of sunshine and of showers,  
 A grief and gladness in the atmosphere.  
 1876. 1877.

## THE POETS

O YE dead Poets, who are living still  
 Immortal in your verse, though life be fled,  
 And ye, O living Poets, who are dead  
 Though ye are living, if neglect can kill,  
 Tell me if in the darkest hours of ill,  
 With drops of anguish falling fast and  
     red  
 From the sharp crown of thorns upon your  
     head,  
 Ye were not glad your errand to fulfil?  
 Yes; for the gift and ministry of Song  
 Have something in them so divinely sweet,  
 It can assuage the bitterness of wrong;  
 Not in the clamor of the crowded street,  
 Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,  
 But in ourselves, are triumph and defeat.  
 1876. (1878.)

## NATURE

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,  
 Leads by the hand her little child to bed,  
 Half willing, half reluctant to be led,  
 And leave his broken playthings on the  
     floor, . . .  
 Still gazing at them through the open door,  
 Nor wholly reassured and comforted  
 By promises of others in their stead,

<sup>1</sup> The burial-place of Washington Irving. On Long-  
 fellow's great admiration for Irving, see the *Life*, vol.  
 I, p. 12.

Which, though more splendid, may not  
 please him more;  
 So Nature deals with us, and takes away  
 Our playthings one by one, and by the hand  
 Leads us to rest so gently, that we go  
 Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,  
 Being too full of sleep to understand  
 How far the unknown transcends the what  
 we know.<sup>1</sup>

1876.

1877.

## VENICE

White swan of cities, slumbering in thy  
 nest  
 So wonderfully built among the reeds  
 Of the lagoon, that fences thee and feeds,  
 As sayeth thy old historian and thy guest !  
 White water-lily, cradled and caressed  
 By ocean streams, and from the silt and  
 weeds  
 Lifting thy golden filaments and seeds,  
 Thy sun-illumined spires, thy crown and  
 crest !  
 White phantom city, whose untrodden  
 streets  
 Are rivers, and whose pavements are the  
 shifting  
 Shadows of palaces and strips of sky;  
 I wait to see thee vanish like the fleets  
 Seen in mirage, or towers of cloud uplifting  
 In air their unsubstantial masonry.

1876.

1877.

## VICTOR AND VANQUISHED

As one who long hath fled with panting  
 breath  
 Before his foe, bleeding and near to fall,  
 I turn and set my back against the wall,  
 And look thee in the face, triumphant  
 Death.  
 I call for aid, and no one answereth;  
 I am alone with thee, who conquerest all;

<sup>1</sup> Foremost among American sonneteers stands Longfellow, the only member of the supreme group who uses this form with ease and dignity. Some score of examples — including the beautiful 'Divina Commedia' series — might be selected from his works and compared with twenty by any modern English poet, save Wordsworth, nor lose thereby for nobility of sentiment and graciousness of diction. Wordsworth himself might have been proud to include 'Nature,' for instance, among his finest sonnets. (WILLIAM SHARP, *American Sonnets*.)

Yet me thy threatening form doth not  
 appall,  
 For thou art but a phantom and a wraith.  
 Wounded and weak, sword broken at the  
 hilt,  
 With armor shattered, and without a shield,  
 I stand unmoved; do with me what thou  
 wilt;

I can resist no more, but will not yield.  
 This is no tournament where cowards tilt;  
 The vanquished here is victor of the field.

1876.

(1882.)

THE THREE SILENCES OF  
MOLINOSTO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER<sup>2</sup>

THREE Silences there are: the first of  
 speech,  
 The second of desire, the third of thought;  
 This is the lore a Spanish monk, distraught  
 With dreams and visions, was the first to  
 teach.  
 These Silences, commingling each with  
 each,  
 Made up the perfect Silence that he sought  
 And prayed for, and wherein at times he  
 caught  
 Mysterious sounds from realms beyond our  
 reach.  
 O thou, whose daily life anticipates  
 The life to come, and in whose thought and  
 word  
 The spiritual world preponderates,  
 Hermit of Amesbury ! thou too hast heard  
 Voices and melodies from beyond the gates,  
 And speakest only when thy soul is stirred !

1877.

(1878.)

WAPENTAKE<sup>3</sup>

TO ALFRED TENNYSON

POET ! I come to touch thy lance with mine;  
 Not as a knight, who on the listed field

<sup>2</sup> Written for Whittier's seventieth birthday.

<sup>3</sup> When any came to take the government of the Hundred or Wapentake in a day and place appointed, as they were accustomed to meet, all the better sort met him with lances, and he alighting from his horse, all rise up to him, and he setting or holding his lance upright, all the rest come with their lances, according to the ancient custom in confirming league and public peace and obedience, and touch his lance or weapon, and thereof called Wapentake, for the Saxon or

Of tourney touched his adversary's shield  
 In token of defiance, but in sign  
 Of homage to the mastery, which is thine,  
 In English song; nor will I keep con-  
     cealed,  
 And voiceless as a rivulet frost-congealed,  
 My admiration for thy verse divine.  
 Not of the howling dervishes of song,  
 Who craze the brain with their delirious  
     dance,  
 Art thou, O sweet historian of the heart!  
 Therefore to thee the laurel-leaves be-  
     long,  
 To thee our love and our allegiance,  
 For thy allegiance to the poet's art.  
 1877. 1877.

### A BALLAD OF THE FRENCH FLEET<sup>1</sup>

OCTOBER, 1746

MR. THOMAS PRINCE *loquitur*.

A FLEET with flags arrayed  
 Sailed from the port of Brest,  
 And the Admiral's ship displayed  
 The signal: 'Steer southwest.'  
 For this Admiral D'Anville  
 Had sworn by cross and crown  
 To ravage with fire and steel  
 Our helpless Boston Town.

old English *wapen* is weapon, and *tac, tactus*, a touch-  
 ing, thereby this meeting called Wapentake, or touch-  
 ing of weapon, because that by that signe and ceremo-  
 nie of touching weapon or the lance, they were sworne  
 and confederate. — Master Lambert in *Minshew*.  
 (LONGFELLOW.)

<sup>1</sup> After the capture of Louisburg in 1745 by the Mas-  
 sachusetts colonists, the French in revenge sent a large  
 fleet against Boston the next year; but it was so dis-  
 abled by storms that it had to put back.

Mr. Thomas Prince was the pastor of the Old South  
 Meeting-house.

In 1877, when the Old South was in danger of  
 being destroyed, Rev. Edward Everett Hale wrote to  
 Longfellow: 'You told me that if the spirit moved,  
 you would try to sing us a song for the Old South  
 Meeting-house. I have found such a charming story  
 that I think it will really tempt you. I want at least  
 to tell it to you. . . . The whole story of the fleet is  
 in Hutchinson's *Massachusetts*, ii. 384, 385. The story  
 of Prince and the prayer is in a tract in the College  
 Library, which I will gladly send you, or Mr. Sibley  
 will. I should think that the assembly in the meeting-  
 house in the gale, and then the terror of the fleet when  
 the gale struck them, would make a ballad — if the  
 spirit moved!'

Compare Whittier's 'In the Old South' and 'The  
 Landmarks,' and Holmes's 'An Appeal for the Old  
 South.'

There were rumors in the street,  
 In the houses there was fear  
 Of the coming of the fleet,  
 And the danger hovering near.  
 And while from mouth to mouth  
 Spread the tidings of dismay,  
 I stood in the Old South,  
 Saying humbly: 'Let us pray!  
 'O Lord! we would not advise;  
 But if in thy Providence  
 A tempest should arise  
 To drive the French Fleet hence,  
 And scatter it far and wide,  
 Or sink it in the sea,  
 We should be satisfied,  
 And thine the glory be.'

This was the prayer I made,  
 For my soul was all on flame,  
 And even as I prayed  
 The answering tempest came;  
 It came with a mighty power,  
 Shaking the windows and walls,  
 And tolling the bell in the tower,  
 As it tolls at funerals.

The lightning suddenly  
 Unsheathed its flaming sword,  
 And I cried: 'Stand still, and see  
 The salvation of the Lord!'  
 The heavens were black with cloud,  
 The sea was white with hail,  
 And ever more fierce and loud  
 Blew the October gale.

The fleet it overtook,  
 And the broad sails in the van  
 Like the tents of Cushan shook,  
 Or the curtains of Midian.  
 Down on the reeling decks  
 Crashed the o'erwhelming seas;  
 Ah, never were there wrecks  
 So pitiful as these!

Like a potter's vessel broke  
 The great ships of the line;  
 They were carried away as a smoke,  
 Or sank like lead in the brine.  
 O Lord! before thy path  
 They vanished and ceased to be,  
 When thou didst walk in wrath  
 With thine horses through the sea!

1877.

1877.

## SONG

**STAY**, stay at home, my heart, and rest;  
**Home**-keeping hearts are happiest,  
**For** those that wander they know not  
 where  
**Are** full of trouble and full of care;  
**To** stay at home is best.

**Weary** and homesick and distressed,  
**They** wander east, they wander west,  
**And** are baffled and beaten and blown  
 about  
**By** the winds of the wilderness of doubt:  
**To** stay at home is best.

**Then** stay at home, my heart, and rest;  
**The** bird is safest in its nest;  
**O'er** all that flutter their wings and fly  
**A** hawk is hovering in the sky;  
**To** stay at home is best.

1877.

1878.

## FROM MY ARM-CHAIR

## TO THE CHILDREN OF CAMBRIDGE

WHO PRESENTED TO ME, ON MY SEVENTY-  
 SECOND BIRTHDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1879, THIS  
 CHAIR MADE FROM THE WOOD OF THE VIL-  
 LAGE BLACKSMITH'S CHESTNUT TREE.<sup>1</sup>

**AM** I a king, that I should call my own  
 This splendid ebon throne?  
**Or** by what reason, or what right divine,  
 Can I proclaim it mine?

**Only**, perhaps, by right divine of song  
 It may to me belong;  
**Only** because the spreading chestnut tree  
 Of old was sung by me.

**Well** I remember it in all its prime,  
 When in the summer-time  
**The** affluent foliage of its branches made  
 A cavern of cool shade.

**There**, by the blacksmith's forge, beside  
 the street,  
 Its blossoms white and sweet

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the chair, with its inscriptions, see the *Life*, vol. iii, pp. 446-448. Longfellow gave orders that every child who wished to see the chair and sit in it should be allowed to do so; and had a large number of copies of this poem printed, one of which was given to each child who wished it.

**Enticed** the bees, until it seemed alive,  
 And murmured like a hive.

**And** when the winds of autumn, with a  
 shout,  
 Tossed its great arms about,  
**The** shining chestnuts, bursting from the  
 sheath,  
 Dropped to the ground beneath.

20

**And** now some fragments of its branches  
 bare,  
 Shaped as a stately chair,  
**Have** by my hearthstone found a home at  
 last,  
 And whisper of the past.

**The** Danish king could not in all his  
 pride  
 Repel the ocean tide,  
**But**, seated in this chair, I can in rhyme  
 Roll back the tide of Time.

**I** see again, as one in vision sees,  
 The blossoms and the bees,  
**And** hear the children's voices shout and  
 call,  
 And the brown chestnuts fall.

30

**I** see the smithy with its fires aglow,  
 I hear the bellows blow,  
**And** the shrill hammers on the anvil beat  
 The iron white with heat!

**And** thus, dear children, have ye made for  
 me  
 This day a jubilee,  
**And** to my more than threescore years and  
 ten  
 Brought back my youth again.

40

**The** heart hath its own memory, like the  
 mind,  
 And in it are enshrined  
**The** precious keepsakes, into which is  
 wrought  
 The giver's loving thought.

**Only** your love and your remembrance  
 could  
 Give life to this dead wood,  
**And** make these branches, leafless now so  
 long,  
 Blossom again in song.

1879.

1879.



ROBERT BURNS<sup>1</sup>

I SEE amid the fields of Ayr  
 A ploughman, who, in foul and fair,  
     Sings at his task  
 So clear, we know not if it is  
 The laverock's song we hear, or his,  
     Nor care to ask.

For him the ploughing of those fields  
 A more ethereal harvest yields  
     Than sheaves of grain;  
 Songs flush with purple bloom the rye, 10  
 The plover's call, the curlew's cry,  
     Sing in his brain.

Touched by his hand, the wayside weed  
 Becomes a flower; the lowliest reed  
     Beside the stream  
 Is clothed with beauty; gorse and grass  
 And heather, where his footsteps pass,  
     The brighter seem.

He sings of love, whose flame illumines  
 The darkness of lone cottage rooms; 20  
     He feels the force,  
 The treacherous undertow and stress  
 Of wayward passions, and no less  
     The keen remorse.

At moments, wrestling with his fate,  
 His voice is harsh, but not with hate;  
     The brush-wood, hung  
 Above the tavern door, lets fall  
 Its bitter leaf, its drop of gall  
     Upon his tongue. 30

But still the music of his song  
 Rises o'er all, elate and strong;  
     Its master-chords  
 Are Manhood, Freedom, Brotherhood,  
 Its discords but an interlude  
     Between the words.

And then to die so young and leave  
 Unfinished what he might achieve!  
     Yet better sure  
 Is this, than wandering up and down, 40  
 An old man in a country town,  
     Infirm and poor.

For now he haunts his native land  
 As an immortal youth; his hand

<sup>1</sup> Compare the poems on Burns by Whittier, Lowell ('At the Burns Centennial,' and 'Incident in a Railroad Car'), Holmes, Wordsworth, etc.

Guides every plough;  
 He sits beside each ingle-nook,  
 His voice is in each rushing brook,  
     Each rustling bough.

His presence haunts this room to-night,  
 A form of mingled mist and light 50  
     From that far coast.  
 Welcome beneath this roof of mine!  
 Welcome! this vacant chair is thine,  
     Dear guest and ghost!

1879.

1880.

## THE TIDE RISES, THE TIDE FALLS

THE tide rises, the tide falls,  
 The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;  
 Along the sea-sands damp and brown  
 The traveller hastens toward the town,  
     And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,  
 But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;  
 The little waves, with their soft, white  
     hands,  
 Efface the footprints in the sands,  
     And the tide rises, the tide falls.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their  
     stalls  
 Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;  
 The day returns, but nevermore  
 Returns the traveller to the shore,  
     And the tide rises, the tide falls.

1879.

(1880.)

## JUGURTHA

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!  
 Cried the African monarch, the splendid,  
 As down to his death in the hollow  
 Dark dungeons of Rome he descended,  
 Uncrowned, unthroned, unattended;  
 How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

How cold are thy baths, Apollo!  
 Cried the Poet, unknown, unbefriended,  
 As the vision, that lured him to follow,  
 With the mist and the darkness blended,  
 And the dream of his life was ended;  
 How cold are thy baths, Apollo!

1879.

(1880.)

THE CROSS OF SNOW<sup>1</sup>

IN the long, sleepless watches of the night,  
A gentle face — the face of one long dead —  
Looks at me from the wall, where round  
its head

The night-lamp casts a halo of pale light.  
Here in this room she died; and soul more  
white

Never through martyrdom of fire was led  
To its repose; nor can in books be read  
The legend of a life more benedight.  
There is a mountain in the distant West,  
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines  
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.  
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast  
These eighteen years, through all the chang-  
ing scenes

And seasons, changeless since the day she  
died.

1879.

1886.

## NIGHT

INTO the darkness and hush of night  
Slowly the landscape sinks, and fades away,  
And with it fade the phantoms of the day,  
The ghosts of men and things, that haunt  
the light.

The crowd, the clamor, the pursuit, the  
flight,

The unprofitable splendor and display,  
The agitations, and the cares that prey  
Upon our hearts, all vanish out of sight.  
The better life begins; the world no more  
Molests us; all its records we erase  
From the dull commonplace book of our  
lives,

That like a palimpsest is written o'er  
With trivial incidents of time and place,  
And lo! the ideal, hidden beneath, revives.

1879.

(1880.)

## L'ENVOI

## THE POET AND HIS SONGS

As the birds come in the spring,  
We know not from where;  
As the stars come at evening  
From depths of the air;

As the rain comes from the cloud,  
And the brook from the ground;

<sup>1</sup> See the note on 'Divina Commedia,' p. 240.

As suddenly, low or loud,  
Out of silence a sound;

As the grape comes to the vine,  
The fruit to the tree;  
As the wind comes to the pine,  
And the tide to the sea;

As come the white sails of ships  
O'er the ocean's verge;  
As comes the smile to the lips,  
The foam to the surge;

So come to the Poet his songs,  
All hitherward blown  
From the misty realm, that belongs  
To the vast Unknown.

His, and not his, are the lays  
He sings; and their fame  
Is his, and not his; and the praise  
And the pride of a name.

For voices pursue him by day,  
And haunt him by night,  
And he listens, and needs must obey,  
When the Angel says, 'Write!'

1880.

1880.

POSSIBILITIES<sup>2</sup>

WHERE are the Poets, unto whom belong  
The Olympian heights; whose singing-  
shafts were sent

Straight to the mark, and not from bows  
half bent,

But with the utmost tension of the thong?  
Where are the stately argosies of song,  
Whose rushing keels made music as they  
went

Sailing in search of some new continent,  
With all sail set, and steady winds and  
strong?

Perhaps there lives some dreamy boy, un-  
taught

In schools, some graduate of the field or  
street,

Who shall become a master of the art,  
An admiral sailing the high seas of thought,  
Fearless and first, and steering with his  
fleet

For lands not yet laid down in any chart.

1882.

1882.

<sup>2</sup> This is the last, but two, of Longfellow's poems.



## JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

### THE VAUDOIS TEACHER<sup>1</sup>

'O LADY fair, these silks of mine are beautiful and rare, —  
The richest web of the Indian loom, which  
beauty's queen might wear;  
And my pearls are pure as thy own fair neck,  
with whose radiant light they vie;  
I have brought them with me a weary way,  
— will my gentle lady buy?'

The lady smiled on the worn old man  
through the dark and clustering  
curls  
Which veiled her brow, as she bent to view  
his silks and glittering pearls;  
And she placed their price in the old man's  
hand and lightly turned away,  
But she paused at the wanderer's earnest  
call, — 'My gentle lady, stay!

<sup>1</sup> This poem was suggested by the account given of the manner in which the Waldenses disseminated their principles among the Catholic gentry. They gained access to the house through their occupation as peddlers of silks, jewels, and trinkets. 'Having disposed of some of their goods,' it is said by a writer who quotes the inquisitor Rainerus Sacco, 'they cautiously intimated that they had commodities far more valuable than these, inestimable jewels, which they would show if they could be protected from the clergy. They would then give their purchasers a Bible or Testament, and thereby many were deluded into heresy.' (WHITTIER.)

The poem was early translated into French and Italian, and became a favorite among all the Waldenses, who however did not know of its American origin. When the Waldensian synod learned of this, in 1875, they instructed their Moderator to send Whittier a letter of thanks and appreciation. This letter, which Whittier greatly prized, began: —

'Dear and Honored Brother, — I have recently learned by a letter from my friend, J. C. Fletcher, now residing in Naples, that you are the author of the charming little poem, "The Vaudois Colporteur," which was translated several years ago in French by Professor de Fellicé, of Montauban, and of which there is also an excellent Italian translation, made by M. Giovanni Nicolini, Professor of our College at Torré Pellicé. There is not a single Vaudois who has received any education who cannot repeat from memory "The Vaudois Colporteur" in French or in Italian.'

See the whole letter, in Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. II, pp. 607-608. Whittier's reply (given in the *Life*, pp. 608-609) was translated into Italian and circulated throughout Italy.

'O lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer lustre flings,  
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled crown on the lofty brow of kings;  
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price,  
whose virtue shall not decay,  
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and  
a blessing on thy way!'

The lady glanced at the mirroring steel  
where her form of grace was seen,  
Where her eye shone clear, and her dark  
locks waved their clasping pearls  
between;  
'Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth,  
thou traveller gray and old,  
And name the price of thy precious gem,  
and my page shall count thy gold.'

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's  
brow, as a small and meagre book,  
Unchased with gold or gem of cost, from  
his folding robe he took!  
'Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price, may  
it prove as such to thee!  
Nay, keep thy gold — I ask it not, for the  
word of God is free!'

The hoary traveller went his way, but the  
gift he left behind  
Hath had its pure and perfect work on that  
highborn maiden's mind,  
And she hath turned from the pride of sin  
to the lowliness of truth,  
And given her human heart to God in its  
beautiful hour of youth!

And she hath left the gray old halls, where  
an evil faith had power,  
The courtly knights of her father's train,  
and the maidens of her bower;  
And she hath gone to the Vaudois vales by  
lordly feet untrod,  
Where the poor and needy of earth are  
rich in the perfect love of God!

TO WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON<sup>1</sup>

CHAMPION of those who groan beneath  
Oppression's iron hand:  
In view of penury, hate, and death,  
I see thee fearless stand.  
Still bearing up thy lofty brow,  
In the steadfast strength of truth,  
In manhood sealing well the vow  
And promise of thy youth.

Go on, for thou hast chosen well;  
On in the strength of God!  
Long as one human heart shall swell  
Beneath the tyrant's rod.  
Speak in a slumbering nation's ear,

<sup>1</sup> The earliest poem in this division [the Anti-Slavery Poems] was my youthful tribute to the great reformer when, himself a young man, he was sounding his trumpet in Essex County. (WHITTIER.)

On Whittier's early relations with Garrison, see Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, pp. 50-52. See also the article on Garrison in Whittier's *Prose Works*, iii, 189-192.

Whittier's anti-slavery poems must necessarily occupy a large place in any selection at all representative of his work. For more than thirty years they formed the chief part of his poetical production. Even to-day no one can fail to recognize the intense sincerity and strength of such poems as 'Expostulation,' 'Massachusetts to Virginia,' 'Ichabod,' 'The Rendition,' etc. On his rôle in the anti-slavery movement, and the sacrifices which he made to it, see especially Professor Carpenter's *Whittier*, chapters iv and v. See also the notes on 'Ichabod' and on Lowell's 'Stanzas on Freedom,' and the passage on Whittier in Lowell's 'Fable for Critics.'

After the war Whittier was one of the most earnest workers against sectional prejudice in the North. It was largely through his efforts that the vote of censure against Sumner, who had advocated the return of all Confederate flags, was repealed. But he would never consent that the anti-slavery poems should be omitted from any edition of his works. His attitude is well shown by a passage in Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, with its significant quotation from one of his letters:—

'Some other American poets, even those who had written bravely against the system of slavery, consented to leave out of their collected works such poems as would be offensive to their Southern readers. Whittier never made this concession . . . and issued no edition of his works that did not present him as an uncompromising foe of slavery. But it was easy to see that his enmity to the institution did not extend to individuals. All his life he numbered among his personal friends not only apologists for slavery, but slaveholders themselves. In replying to the charge of a Southern paper that he was an enemy of the South, he once wrote to a friend: "I was never an enemy to the South or the holders of slaves. I inherited from my Quaker ancestry hatred of slavery, but not of slaveholders. To every call of suffering or distress in the South I have promptly responded to the extent of my ability. I was one of the very first to recognize the rare gift of the Carolinian poet Timrod, and I was the intimate friend of the lamented Paul H. Hayne, though both wrote fiery lyrics against the North."'

This poem was read at the Convention in Philadelphia which founded the American Anti-Slavery Society, in December, 1833. Whittier was a delegate from Massachusetts. 'I set a higher value on my name as appended to the Anti-Slavery Declaration of 1833,' he said in later life, 'than on the title-page of any book.'

As thou hast ever spoken,  
Until the dead in sin shall hear,  
The fetter's link be broken!

I love thee with a brother's love,  
I feel my pulses thrill,  
To mark thy spirit soar above  
The cloud of human ill.  
My heart hath leaped to answer thine,  
And echo back thy words,  
As leaps the warrior's at the shine  
And flash of kindred swords!

They tell me thou art rash and vain,  
A searcher after fame;  
That thou art striving but to gain  
A long-enduring name;  
That thou hast nerved the Afric's hand  
And steeled the Afric's heart,  
To shake aloft his vengeful brand,  
And rend his chain apart.

Have I not known thee well, and read  
Thy mighty purpose long?  
And watched the trials which have made  
Thy human spirit strong?  
And shall the slanderer's demon breath  
Avail with one like me,  
To dim the sunshine of my faith  
And earnest trust in thee?

Go on, the dagger's point may glare  
Amid thy pathway's gloom;  
The fate which sternly threatens there  
Is glorious martyrdom!  
Then onward with a martyr's zeal;  
And wait thy sure reward  
When man to man no more shall kneel,  
And God alone be Lord!

1831.

RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE<sup>2</sup>

O MOTHER EARTH! upon thy lap  
Thy weary ones receiving,  
And o'er them, silent as a dream,  
Thy grassy mantle weaving,

<sup>2</sup> In an article published in the *Essex Gazette*, in July, 1833, less than a month after Randolph's death. Whittier says: 'The late noble example of the eloquent statesman of Roanoke, the manumission of his slaves, speaks volumes to his political friends. In the last hour of his existence, when his soul was struggling from its broken tenement, his latest effort was the confirmation of this generous act of a former period. Light rest the turf upon him, beneath his patrimonial oaks! The prayers of many hearts made happy by his benevolence shall linger over his grave, and bless it.' The poem was

Fold softly in thy long embrace  
That heart so worn and broken,  
And cool its pulse of fire beneath  
Thy shadows old and oaken.

Shut out from him the bitter word  
And serpent hiss of scorning ;  
Nor let the storms of yesterday  
Disturb his quiet morning.  
Breathe over him forgetfulness  
Of all save deeds of kindness,  
And, save to smiles of grateful eyes,  
Press down his lids in blindness.

There, where with living ear and eye  
He heard Potomac's flowing,  
And, through his tall ancestral trees,  
Saw autumn's sunset glowing,  
He sleeps, still looking to the west,  
Beneath the dark wood shadow,  
As if he still would see the sun  
Sink down on wave and meadow.

Bard, Sage, and Tribune ! in himself  
All moods of mind contrasting, —  
The tenderest wail of human woe,  
The scorn like lightning blasting;  
The pathos which from rival eyes  
Unwilling tears could summon,  
The stinging taunt, the fiery burst  
Of hatred scarcely human !

Mirth, sparkling like a diamond shower,  
From lips of life-long sadness;  
Clear picturings of majestic thought  
Upon a ground of madness;  
And over all Romance and Song  
A classic beauty throwing,  
And laurelled Clio at his side  
Her storied pages showing.

All parties feared him: each in turn  
Beheld its schemes disjointed,  
As right or left his fatal glance  
And spectral finger pointed.  
Sworn foe of Cant, he smote it down  
With trenchant wit unsparing,  
And, mocking, rent with ruthless hand  
The robe Pretence was wearing.

Too honest or too proud to feign  
A love he never cherished,

probably written, according to Mr. Pickard, at the same  
time as the article. It was printed in the first number  
of the *National Era* issued after Whittier became cor-  
responding editor, in January, 1847.

Beyond Virginia's border line  
His patriotism perished.  
While others hailed in distant skies  
Our eagle's dusky pinion,  
He only saw the mountain bird  
Stoop o'er his Old Dominion !

Still through each change of fortune  
strange,  
Racked nerve, and brain all burning,  
His loving faith in Mother-land  
Knew never shade of turning ;  
By Britain's lakes, by Neva's tide,  
Whatever sky was o'er him,  
He heard her rivers' rushing sound,  
Her blue peaks rose before him.

He held his slaves, yet made withal  
No false and vain pretences,  
Nor paid a lying priest to seek  
For Scriptural defences.  
His harshest words of proud rebuke,  
His bitterest taunt and scorning,  
Fell fire-like on the Northern brow  
That bent to him in fawning.

He held his slaves; yet kept the while  
His reverence for the Human;  
In the dark vassals of his will  
He saw but Man and Woman !  
No hunter of God's outraged poor  
His Roanoke valley entered;  
No trader in the souls of men  
Across his threshold ventured.

And when the old and wearied man  
Lay down for his last sleeping,  
And at his side, a slave no more,  
His brother-man stood weeping,  
His latest thought, his latest breath,  
To Freedom's duty giving,  
With failing tongue and trembling hand  
The dying blest the living.

Oh, never bore his ancient State  
A truer son or braver !  
None trampling with a calmer scorn  
On foreign hate or favor.  
He knew her faults, yet never stooped  
His proud and manly feeling  
To poor excuses of the wrong  
Or meanness of concealing.

But none beheld with clearer eye  
The plague-spot o'er her spreading,

None heard more sure the steps of Doom  
 Along her future treading. 100  
 For her as for himself he spake,  
 When, his gaunt frame upbracing,  
 He traced with dying hand 'Remorse !'  
 And perished in the tracing.

As from the grave where Henry sleeps,  
 From Vernon's weeping willow,  
 And from the grassy pall which hides  
 The Sage of Monticello,  
 So from the leaf-strewn burial-stone  
 Of Randolph's lowly dwelling, 110  
 Virginia! o'er thy land of slaves  
 A warning voice is swelling !

And hark ! from thy deserted fields  
 Are sadder warnings spoken,  
 From quenched hearths, where thy exiled  
 sons  
 Their household gods have broken.  
 The curse is on thee, — wolves for men,  
 And briers for corn-sheaves giving !  
 Oh, more than all thy dead renown  
 Were now one hero living ! 120  
 1833 ? 1847.

### EXPOSTULATION <sup>1</sup>

OUR fellow-countrymen in chains !  
 Slaves, in a land of light and law !  
 Slaves, crouching on the very plains  
 Where rolled the storm of Freedom's war !  
 A groan from Eutaw's haunted wood,  
 A wail where Camden's martyrs fell,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Charles Follen, a German patriot, who had come to America for the freedom which was denied him in his native land, allied himself with the abolitionists, and at a convention of delegates from all the anti-slavery organizations in New England, held at Boston in May, 1834, was chairman of a committee to prepare an address to the people of New England. Toward the close of the address occurred the passage which suggested these lines : —

'The despotism which our fathers could not bear in their native country is expiring, and the sword of justice in her reformed hands has applied its exterminating edge to slavery. Shall the United States — the free United States, which could not bear the bonds of a king — cradle the bondage which a king is abolishing ? Shall a Republic be less free than a Monarchy ? Shall we, in the vigor and buoyancy of our manhood, be less energetic in righteousness than a kingdom in its age ?' (WHITTIER.)

The original title of the poem was simply 'Stanzas,' and later it was called 'Follen.' Garrison said of it when it first appeared : —

'Our gifted Brother Whittier has again seized the great trumpet of Liberty, and blown a blast that shall ring from Maine to the Rocky Mountains.'

The poem became popular throughout the North and West, and was for many years a favorite at declamation contests and anti-slavery meetings.

By every shrine of patriot blood,  
 From Moultrie's wall and Jasper's well :

By storied hill and hallowed grot,  
 By mossy wood and marshy glen,  
 Whence rang of old the rifle-shot,  
 And hurrying about of Marion's men !  
 The groan of breaking hearts is there,  
 The falling lash, the fetter's clank !  
 Slaves, slaves are breathing in that air  
 Which old De Kalb and Sumter drank !

What ho ! our countrymen in chains !  
 The whip on woman's shrinking flesh !  
 Our soil yet reddening with the stains  
 Caught from her scourging, warm and  
 fresh !  
 What ! mothers from their children riven !  
 What ! God's own image bought and sold !  
 Americans to market driven,  
 And bartered as the brute for gold !

Speak ! shall their agony of prayer  
 Come thrilling to our hearts in vain ?  
 To us whose fathers scorned to bear  
 The paltry menace of a chain ;  
 To us, whose boast is loud and long  
 Of holy Liberty and Light ; 30  
 Say, shall these writhing slaves of Wrong  
 Plead vainly for their plundered Right ?

What ! shall we send, with lavish breath,  
 Our sympathies across the wave,  
 Where Manhood, on the field of death,  
 Strikes for his freedom or a grave ?  
 Shall prayers go up, and hymns be sung  
 For Greece, the Moslem fetter spurning,  
 And millions hail with pen and tongue  
 Our light on all her altars burning ? 40

Shall Belgium feel, and gallant France,  
 By Vendome's pile and Schoenbrun's wall,  
 And Poland, gasping on her lance,  
 The impulse of our cheering call ?  
 And shall the slave, beneath our eye,  
 Clank o'er our fields his hateful chain ?  
 And toss his fettered arms on high,  
 And groan for Freedom's gift, in vain ?

Oh, say, shall Prussia's banner be  
 A refuge for the stricken slave ? 50  
 And shall the Russian serf go free  
 By Baikal's lake and Neva's wave ?  
 And shall the wintry-bosomed Dane  
 Relax the iron hand of pride,



And bid his bondmen cast the chain  
From fettered soul and limb aside ?

Shall every flap of England's flag  
Proclaim that all around are free,  
From farthest Ind to each blue crag  
That beetles o'er the Western Sea ? 60  
And shall we scoff at Europe's kings,  
When Freedom's fire is dim with us,  
And round our country's altar clings  
The damning shade of Slavery's curse ?

Go, let us ask of Constantine  
To loose his grasp on Poland's throat;  
And beg the lord of Mahmoud's line  
To spare the struggling Suliote;  
Will not the scorching answer come  
From turbaned Turk, and scornful Russ:  
'Go, loose your fettered slaves at home, 71  
Then turn and ask the like of us !'

Just God ! and shall we calmly rest,  
The Christian's scorn, the heathen's mirth,  
Content to live the lingering jest  
And by-word of a mocking Earth ?  
Shall our own glorious land retain  
That curse which Europe scorns to bear ?  
Shall our own brethren drag the chain  
Which not even Russia's menials wear ?

Up, then, in Freedom's manly part, 81  
From graybeard old to fiery youth,  
And on the nation's naked heart  
Scatter the living coals of Truth !  
Up ! while ye slumber, deeper yet  
The shadow of our fame is growing !  
Up ! while ye pause, our sun may set  
In blood around our altars flowing !

Oh ! rouse ye, ere the storm comes forth,  
The gathered wrath of God and man, 90  
Like that which wasted Egypt's earth,  
When hail and fire above it ran.  
Hear ye no warnings in the air ?  
Feel ye no earthquake underneath ?  
Up, up ! why will ye slumber where  
The sleeper only wakes in death ?

Rise now for Freedom ! not in strife  
Like that your sterner fathers saw,  
The awful waste of human life,  
The glory and the guilt of war: 100  
But break the chain, the yoke remove,  
And smite to earth Oppression's rod,

With those mild arms of Truth and Love,  
Made mighty through the living God !

Down let the shrine of Moloch sink,  
And leave no traces where it stood;  
Nor longer let its idol drink  
His daily cup of human blood;  
But rear another altar there,  
To Truth and Love and Mercy given, 110  
And Freedom's gift, and Freedom's prayer,  
Shall call an answer down from Heaven !  
1834. 1834.

### THE FAREWELL<sup>1</sup>

OF A VIRGINIA SLAVE MOTHER TO HER  
DAUGHTERS SOLD INTO SOUTHERN  
BONDAGE

GONE, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.  
Where the slave-whip ceaseless swings,  
Where the noisome insect stings,  
Where the fever demon strews  
Poison with the falling dews,  
Where the sickly sunbeams glare  
Through the hot and misty air;  
Gone, gone, — sold and gone, 10  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
From Virginia's hills and waters;  
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.  
There no mother's eye is near them,  
There no mother's ear can hear them;  
Never, when the torturing lash  
Seams their back with many a gash,  
Shall a mother's kindness bless them,  
Or a mother's arms caress them. 20

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
From Virginia's hills and waters;  
Woe is me, my stolen daughters !

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.  
Oh, when weary, sad, and slow,  
From the fields at night they go,  
Faint with toil, and racked with pain,  
To their cheerless homes again, 30  
There no brother's voice shall greet them,

<sup>1</sup> Of all Whittier's anti-slavery poems this approaches nearest to the half-romantic style of Longfellow's 'Poems on Slavery.'

There no father's welcome meet them.  
Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
From Virginia's hills and waters;  
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.  
From the tree whose shadow lay  
On their childhood's place of play; 40  
From the cool spring where they drank;  
Rock, and hill, and rivulet bank;  
From the solemn house of prayer,  
And the holy counsels there;

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
From Virginia's hills and waters;  
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone; 50  
Toiling through the weary day,  
And at night the spoiler's prey.  
Oh, that they had earlier died,  
Sleeping calmly, side by side,  
Where the tyrant's power is o'er,  
And the fetter galls no more!

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone,  
From Virginia's hills and waters;  
Woe is me, my stolen daughters! 60

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone.  
By the holy love He beareth;  
By the bruised reed He spareth;  
Oh, may He, to whom alone  
All their cruel wrongs are known,  
Still their hope and refuge prove,  
With a more than mother's love.

Gone, gone, — sold and gone,  
To the rice-swamp dank and lone, 70  
From Virginia's hills and waters;  
Woe is me, my stolen daughters!

1838.

### THE MERRIMAC

STREAM of my fathers! sweetly still  
The sunset rays thy valley fill;  
Poured slantwise down the long defile,  
Wave, wood, and spire beneath them smile.  
I see the winding Powow fold  
The green hill in its belt of gold,  
And following down its wavy line,

Its sparkling waters blend with thine.  
There's not a tree upon thy side,  
Nor rock, which thy returning tide  
As yet hath left abrupt and stark  
Above thy evening water-mark;  
No calm cove with its rocky hem,  
No isle whose emerald swells begem  
Thy broad, smooth current; not a sail  
Bowed to the freshening ocean gale;  
No small boat with its busy oars,  
Nor gray wall sloping to thy shores;  
Nor farm-house with its maple shade,  
Or rigid poplar colonnade, 20  
But lies distinct and full in sight,  
Beneath this gush of sunset light.  
Centuries ago, that harbor-bar,  
Stretching its length of foam afar,  
And Salisbury's beach of shining sand,  
And yonder island's wave-smoothed strand.  
Saw the adventurer's tiny sail,  
Flit, stooping from the eastern gale;  
And o'er these woods and waters broke  
The cheer from Britain's hearts of oak, 30  
As brightly on the voyager's eye  
Weary of forest, sea, and sky,  
Breaking the dull continuous wood,  
The Merrimac rolled down his flood;  
Mingling that clear pellucid brook,  
Which channels vast Agiochook  
When spring-time's sun and shower unlock  
The frozen fountains of the rock,  
And more abundant waters given  
From that pure lake, 'The Smile of  
Heaven,'<sup>1</sup> 40  
Tributes from vale and mountain-side, —  
With ocean's dark, eternal tide!

On yonder rocky cape, which braves  
The stormy challenge of the waves,  
Midst tangled vine and dwarfish wood,  
The hardy Anglo-Saxon stood,<sup>2</sup>  
Planting upon the topmost crag  
The staff of England's battle-flag;  
And, while from out its heavy fold  
Saint George's crimson cross unrolled, 50  
Midst roll of drum and trumpet blare,  
And weapons brandishing in air,  
He gave to that lone promontory<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Winnepesaukee. The Indian name was thought to mean 'The Smile of the Great Spirit.' See 'The Lakeside' and 'Summer by the Lakeside.'

<sup>2</sup> The celebrated Captain Smith, after resigning the government of the Colony in Virginia, in his capacity of 'Admiral of New England,' made a careful survey of the coast from Penobscot to Cape Cod, in the summer of 1614. (WHITTIER.)

<sup>3</sup> Captain Smith gave to the promontory now called

The sweetest name in all his story;  
Of her, the flower of Islam's daughters,  
Whose harems look on Stamboul's wa-  
ters, —

Who, when the chance of war had bound  
The Moslem chain his limbs around,  
Wreathed o'er with silk that iron chain,  
Soothed with her smiles his hours of pain,  
And fondly to her youthful slave 61  
A dearer gift than freedom gave.

But look ! the yellow light no more  
Streams down on wave and verdant shore;  
And clearly on the calm air swells  
The twilight voice of distant bells.  
From Ocean's bosom, white and thin,  
The mists come slowly rolling in;  
Hills, woods, the river's rocky rim,  
Amidst the sea-like vapor swim, 70  
While yonder lonely coast-light, set  
Within its wave-washed minaret,  
Half quenched, a beamless star and pale,  
Shines dimly through its cloudy veil !

Home of my fathers ! — I have stood  
Where Hudson rolled his lordly flood:  
Seen sunrise rest and sunset fade  
Along his frowning Palisade;  
Looked down the Appalachian peak  
On Juniata's silver streak; 80  
Have seen along his valley gleam  
The Mohawk's softly winding stream;  
The level light of sunset shine  
Through broad Potomac's hem of pine;  
And autumn's rainbow-tinted banner  
Hang lightly o'er the Susquehanna;  
Yet wheresoe'er his step might be,  
Thy wandering child looked back to thee !  
Heard in his dreams thy river's sound  
Of murmuring on its pebbly bound, 90  
The unforgotten swell and roar  
Of waves on thy familiar shore;  
And saw, amidst the curtained gloom  
And quiet of his lonely room,  
Thy sunset scenes before him pass;  
As, in Agrippa's magic glass,  
The loved and lost arose to view,  
Remembered groves in greenness grew,  
Bathed still in childhood's morning dew,  
Along whose bowers of beauty swept 100  
Whatever Memory's mourners wept,

Cape Ann, the name of Tragabizanda, in memory of  
his young and beautiful mistress of that name, who,  
while he was a captive at Constantinople, like Desde-  
mona, 'loved him for the dangers he had passed.'  
(WHITTIER.)

Sweet faces, which the charnel kept,  
Young, gentle eyes, which long had slept;  
And while the gazer leaned to trace,  
More near, some dear familiar face,  
He wept to find the vision flown, —  
A phantom and a dream alone !

1841.

MEMORIES <sup>1</sup>

A BEAUTIFUL and happy girl, <sup>2</sup>  
With step as light as summer air,  
Eyes glad with smiles, and brow of pearl,  
Shadowed by many a careless curl  
Of unconfined and flowing hair ;  
A seeming child in everything,  
Save thoughtful brow and ripening  
charms,  
As Nature wears the smile of Spring  
When sinking into Summer's arms.

A mind rejoicing in the light 10  
Which melted through its graceful  
bower,  
Leaf after leaf, dew-moist and bright,  
And stainless in its holy white,  
Unfolding like a morning flower:  
A heart, which, like a fine-toned lute,  
With every breath of feeling woke,  
And, even when the tongue was mute,  
From eye and lip in music spoke.

How thrills once more the lengthening  
chain  
Of memory, at the thought of thee ! 20  
Old hopes which long in dust have lain,  
Old dreams, come thronging back again,  
And boyhood lives again in me;  
I feel its glow upon my cheek,

<sup>1</sup> It was not without thought and deliberation, that  
in 1888 he directed this poem to be placed at the head  
of his Poems Subjective and Reminiscent. He had never  
before publicly acknowledged how much of his heart  
was wrapped up in this delightful play of poetic fancy.  
The poem was written in 1841, and although the ro-  
mance it embalms lies far back of this date, possibly  
there is a heart still beating which fully understands  
its meaning. The biographer can do no more than  
make this suggestion, which has the sanction of the  
poet's explicit word. To a friend who told him that  
*Memories* was her favorite poem, he said, 'I love it  
too; but I hardly knew whether to publish it, it was  
so personal and near my heart.' (Pickard's *Life of*  
*Whittier*, vol. i, p. 276.)

See also Pickard's *Whittier-Land*, pp. 66-67, and the  
poem 'My Playmate.'

<sup>2</sup> Whittier was especially fond of these two opening  
stanzas. He had already used the lines to describe an  
ideal character in 'Moll Pitcher,' published in 1832, but  
not now included in his collected works.

Its fulness of the heart is mine,  
As when I leaned to hear thee speak,  
Or raised my doubtful eye to thine.

I hear again thy low replies,  
I feel thy arm within my own,  
And timidly again arise 30  
The fringed lids of hazel eyes,  
With soft brown tresses overblown.  
Ah! memories of sweet summer eves,  
Of moonlit wave and willowy way,  
Of stars and flowers, and dewy leaves,  
And smiles and tones more dear than  
they!

Ere this, thy quiet eye hath smiled  
My picture of thy youth to see,  
When, half a woman, half a child,  
Thy very artlessness beguiled, 40  
And folly's self seemed wise in thee;  
I too can smile, when o'er that hour  
The lights of memory backward stream,  
Yet feel the while that manhood's power  
Is vainer than my boyhood's dream.

Years have passed on, and left their trace,  
Of graver care and deeper thought;  
And unto me the calm, cold face  
Of manhood, and to thee the grace  
Of woman's pensive beauty brought. 50  
More wide, perchance, for blame than  
praise,  
The school-boy's humble name has flown;  
Thine, in the green and quiet ways  
Of unobtrusive goodness known.

And wider yet in thought and deed  
Diverge our pathways, one in youth;  
Thine the Genevan's sternest creed,  
While answers to my spirit's need  
The Derby dalesman's simple truth. 60  
For thee, the priestly rite and prayer,  
And holy day, and solemn psalm;  
For me, the silent reverence where  
My brethren gather, slow and calm.

Yet hath thy spirit left on me  
An impress Time has worn not out,  
And something of myself in thee,  
A shadow from the past, I see,  
Lingering, even yet, thy way about;  
Not wholly can the heart unlearn  
That lesson of its better hours, 70  
Not yet has Time's dull footstep worn  
To common dust that path of flowers.

Thus, while at times before our eyes  
The shadows melt, and fall apart,  
And, smiling through them, round us lies  
The warm light of our morning skies, —  
The Indian Summer of the heart!  
In secret sympathies of mind,  
In founts of feeling which retain  
Their pure, fresh flow, we yet may find 80  
Our early dreams not wholly vain!  
1841. 1843.

### HAMPTON BEACH

THE sunlight glitters keen and bright,  
Where, miles away,  
Lies stretching to my dazzled sight  
A luminous belt, a misty light,  
Beyond the dark pine bluffs and wastes of  
sandy gray.

The tremulous shadow of the Sea!  
Against its ground  
Of silvery light, rock, hill, and tree,  
Still as a picture, clear and free,  
With varying outline mark the coast for  
miles around. 10

On — on — we tread with loose-flung rein  
Our seaward way,  
Through dark-green fields and blossom-  
ing grain,  
Where the wild brier-rose skirts the lane,  
And bends above our heads the flowering  
locust spray.

Ha! like a kind hand on my brow  
Comes this fresh breeze,  
Cooling its dull and feverish glow,  
While through my being seems to flow  
The breath of a new life, the healing of the  
seas! 20

Now rest we, where this grassy mound  
His feet hath set  
In the great waters, which have bound  
His granite ankles greenly round  
With long and tangled moss, and weeds  
with cool spray wet.

Good-by to Pain and Care! I take  
Mine ease to-day:  
Here where these sunny waters break,  
And ripples this keen breeze, I shake  
All burdens from the heart, all weary  
thoughts away. 30

I draw a freer breath, I seem  
 Like all I see —  
 Waves in the sun, the white-winged gleam  
 Of sea-birds in the slanting beam,  
 And far-off sails which flit before the  
 southwind free.

So when Time's veil shall fall asunder,  
 The soul may know  
 No fearful change, nor sudden wonder,  
 Nor sink the weight of mystery under,  
 But with the upward rise, and with the  
 vastness grow. 40

And all we shrink from now may seem  
 No new revealing;  
 Familiar as our childhood's stream,  
 Or pleasant memory of a dream  
 The loved and cherished Past upon the new  
 life stealing.

Serene and mild the untried light  
 May have its dawning;  
 And, as in summer's northern night  
 The evening and the dawn unite,  
 The sunset hues of Time blend with the  
 soul's new morning. 50

I sit alone; in foam and spray  
 Wave after wave  
 Breaks on the rocks which, stern and gray,  
 Shoulder the broken tide away,  
 Or murmurs hoarse and strong through  
 mossy cleft and cave.

What heed I of the dusty land  
 And noisy town?  
 I see the mighty deep expand  
 From its white line of glimmering sand  
 To where the blue of heaven on bluer  
 waves shuts down! 60

In listless quietude of mind,  
 I yield to all  
 The change of cloud and wave and wind;  
 And passive on the flood reclined,  
 I wander with the waves, and with them  
 rise and fall.

But look, thou dreamer! wave and shore  
 In shadow lie;  
 The night-wind warns me back once more  
 To where, my native hill-tops o'er,  
 Bends like an arch of fire the glowing sun-  
 set sky. 70

So then, beach, bluff, and wave, farewell!  
 I bear with me  
 No token stone nor glittering shell,  
 But long and oft shall Memory tell  
 Of this brief thoughtful hour of musing by  
 the Sea.

1843.

CASSANDRA SOUTHWICK<sup>1</sup>

To the God of all sure mercies let my bless-  
 ing rise to-day,  
 From the scoffer and the cruel He hath  
 plucked the spoil away;  
 Yea, He who cooled the furnace around the  
 faithful three,  
 And tamed the Chaldean lions, hath set  
 his handmaid free!

Last night I saw the sunset melt through  
 my prison bars,  
 Last night across my damp earth-floor fell  
 the pale gleam of stars;  
 In the coldness and the darkness all through  
 the long night-time,  
 My grated casement whitened with au-  
 tumn's early rime.

Alone, in that dark sorrow, hour after hour  
 crept by;  
 Star after star looked palely in and sank  
 adown the sky; 10  
 No sound amid night's stillness, save that  
 which seemed to be  
 The dull and heavy beating of the pulses  
 of the sea;

All night I sat unsleeping, for I knew that  
 on the morrow  
 The ruler and the cruel priest would mock  
 me in my sorrow,  
 Dragged to their place of market, and bar-  
 gained for and sold,  
 Like a lamb before the shambles, like a  
 heifer from the fold!

<sup>1</sup> In 1658 two young persons, son and daughter of Lawrence Southwick of Salem, who had himself been imprisoned and deprived of nearly all his property for having entertained Quakers at his house, were fined for non-attendance at church. They being unable to pay the fine, the General Court issued an order empowering 'The Treasurer of the County to sell the said persons to any of the English nation of Virginia or Barbadoes, to answer said fines.' An attempt was made to carry this order into execution, but no shipmaster was found willing to convey them to the West Indies. (WHITTIER.)

Oh, the weakness of the flesh was there, —  
 the shrinking and the shame;  
 And the low voice of the Tempter like  
 whispers to me came:  
 'Why sit'st thou thus forlornly,' the  
 wicked murmur said,  
 Damp walls thy bower of beauty, cold  
 earth thy maiden bed? 20

'Where be the smiling faces, and voices  
 soft and sweet,  
 Seen in thy father's dwelling, heard in the  
 pleasant street?  
 Where be the youths whose glances, the  
 summer Sabbath through,  
 Turned tenderly and timidly unto thy  
 father's pew?

'Why sit'st thou here, Cassandra? — Be-  
 think thee with what mirth  
 The happy schoolmates gather around the  
 warm, bright hearth;  
 How the crimson shadows tremble on fore-  
 heads white and fair,  
 On eyes of merry girlhood, half hid in  
 golden hair.

'Not for thee the hearth-fire brightens,  
 not for thee kind words are spoken,  
 Not for thee the nuts of Wenham woods  
 by laughing boys are broken; 30  
 No first-fruits of the orchard within thy  
 lap are laid,  
 For thee no flowers of autumn the youth-  
 ful hunters braid.

'O weak, deluded maiden! — by crazy  
 fancies led,  
 With wild and raving railers an evil path  
 to tread;  
 To leave a wholesome worship, and teach-  
 ing pure and sound,  
 And mate with maniac women, loose-  
 haired and sackcloth bound, —

'Mad scoffers of the priesthood, who mock  
 at things divine,  
 Who rail against the pulpit, and holy bread  
 and wine;  
 Sore from their cart-tail scourgings, and  
 from the pillory lame,  
 Rejoicing in their wretchedness, and glory-  
 ing in their shame. 40

'And what a fate awaits thee! — a sadly  
 toiling slave,

Dragging the slowly lengthening chain of  
 bondage to the grave!  
 Think of thy woman's nature, subdued in  
 hopeless thrall,  
 The easy prey of any, the scoff and scorn  
 of all!'

Oh, ever as the Tempter spoke, and feeble  
 Nature's fears  
 Wrung drop by drop the scalding flow of  
 unavailing tears,  
 I wrestled down the evil thoughts, and  
 strove in silent prayer,  
 To feel, O Helper of the weak! that Thou  
 indeed wert there!

I thought of Paul and Silas, within Phi-  
 lippi's cell,  
 And how from Peter's sleeping limbs the  
 prison shackles fell, 50  
 Till I seemed to hear the trailing of an  
 angel's robe of white,  
 And to feel a blessed presence invisible to  
 sight.

Bless the Lord for all his mercies! — for  
 the peace and love I felt,  
 Like dew of Hermon's holy hill, upon my  
 spirit melt;  
 When 'Get behind me, Satan!' was the  
 language of my heart,  
 And I felt the Evil Tempter with all his  
 doubts depart.

Slow broke the gray cold morning; again  
 the sunshine fell,  
 Flecked with the shade of bar and grate  
 within my lonely cell;  
 The hoar-frost melted on the wall, and up-  
 ward from the street  
 Came careless laugh and idle word, and  
 tread of passing feet. 60

At length the heavy bolts fell back, my  
 door was open cast,  
 And slowly at the sheriff's side, up the  
 long street I passed;  
 I heard the murmur round me, and felt,  
 but dared not see,  
 How, from every door and window, the  
 people gazed on me.

And doubt and fear fell on me, shame  
 burned upon my cheek,  
 Swam earth and sky around me, my trem-  
 bling limbs grew weak:



'O Lord! support thy handmaid; and from  
her soul cast out  
The fear of man, which brings a snare, the  
weakness and the doubt.'

Then the dreary shadows scattered, like a  
cloud in morning's breeze,  
And a low deep voice within me seemed  
whispering words like these: 70  
'Though thy earth be as the iron, and thy  
heaven a brazen wall,  
Trust still his loving-kindness whose power  
is over all.'

We paused at length, where at my feet the  
sunlit waters broke  
On glaring reach of shining beach, and  
shingly wall of rock;  
The merchant-ships lay idly there, in hard  
clear lines on high,  
Tracing with rope and slender spar their  
network on the sky.

And there were ancient citizens, cloak-  
wrapped and grave and cold,  
And grim and stout sea-captains with faces  
bronzed and old,  
And on his horse, with Rawson, his cruel  
clerk at hand,  
Sat dark and haughty Endicott, the ruler  
of the land. 80

And poisoning with his evil words the  
ruler's ready ear,  
The priest leaned o'er his saddle, with laugh  
and scoff and jeer;  
It stirred my soul, and from my lips the  
seal of silence broke,  
As if through woman's weakness a warning  
spirit spoke.

I cried, 'The Lord rebuke thee, thou smiter  
of the meek,  
Thou robber of the righteous, thou trampler  
of the weak!  
Go light the dark, cold hearth-stones, —  
go turn the prison lock  
Of the poor hearts thou hast hunted, thou  
wolf amid the flock!'

Dark lowered the brows of Endicott, and  
with a deeper red  
O'er Rawson's wine-empurpled cheek the  
flush of anger spread; 90

'Good people,' quoth the white-lipped priest,  
'heed not her words so wild,  
Her Master speaks within her, — the Devil  
owns his child!'

But gray heads shook, and young brows  
knit, the while the sheriff read  
That law the wicked rulers against the poor  
have made,  
Who to their house of Rimmon and idol  
priesthood bring  
No bended knee of worship, nor gainful  
offering.

Then to the stout sea-captains the sheriff,  
turning, said, —  
'Which of ye, worthy seamen, will take this  
Quaker maid?  
In the Isle of fair Barbadoes, or on Vir-  
ginia's shore,  
You may hold her at a higher price than  
Indian girl or Moor.' 100

Grim and silent stood the captains; and when  
again he cried,  
'Speak out, my worthy seamen!' — no  
voice, no sign replied;  
But I felt a hard hand press my own, and  
kind words met my ear, —  
'God bless thee, and preserve thee, my  
gentle girl and dear!'

A weight seemed lifted from my heart, a  
pitying friend was nigh, —  
I felt it in his hard, rough hand, and saw it  
in his eye;  
And when again the sheriff spoke, that  
voice, so kind to me,  
Growled back its stormy answer like the  
roaring of the sea, —

'Pile my ship with bars of silver, pack with  
coins of Spanish gold,  
From keel-piece up to deck-plank, the room-  
age of her hold, 110  
By the living God who made me! — I  
would sooner in your bay  
Sink ship and crew and cargo, than bear  
this child away!'

'Well answered, worthy captain, shame on  
their cruel laws!'  
Ran through the crowd in murmurs loud  
the people's just applause.



'Like the herdsmen of Tekoa, in Israel of old,  
Shall we see the poor and righteous again  
for silver sold?'

I looked on haughty Endicott; with weapon  
half-way drawn,  
Swept round the throng his lion glare of  
bitter hate and scorn;  
Fiercely he drew his bridle-rein, and turned  
in silence back,  
And sneering priest and baffled clerk rode  
murmuring in his track. 120

Hard after them the sheriff looked, in bit-  
terness of soul;  
Thrice smote his staff upon the ground, and  
crushed his parchment roll.  
'Good friends,' he said, 'since both have  
fled, the ruler and the priest,  
Judge ye, if from their further work I be  
not well released.'

Loud was the cheer which, full and clear,  
swept round the silent bay,  
As, with kind words and kinder looks, he  
bade me go my way;  
For He who turns the courses of the stream-  
let of the glen,  
And the river of great waters, had turned  
the hearts of men.

Oh, at that hour the very earth seemed  
changed beneath my eye,  
A holier wonder round me rose the blue  
walls of the sky, 130  
A lovelier light on rock and hill and stream  
and woodland lay,  
And softer lapsed on sunnier sands the wa-  
ters of the bay.

Thanksgiving to the Lord of life! to Him  
all praises be,  
Who from the hands of evil men hath set  
his handmaid free;  
All praise to Him before whose power the  
mighty are afraid,  
Who takes the crafty in the snare which  
for the poor is laid!

Sing, O my soul, rejoicingly, on evening's  
twilight calm  
Uplift the loud thanksgiving, pour forth  
the grateful psalm;

Let all dear hearts with me rejoice, as did  
the saints of old,  
When of the Lord's good angel the rescued  
Peter told. 140

And weep and howl, ye evil priests and  
mighty men of wrong,  
The Lord shall smite the proud, and lay  
His hand upon the strong.  
Woe to the wicked rulers in his avenging  
hour!  
Woe to the wolves who seek the flocks to  
raven and devour!

But let the humble ones arise, the poor in  
heart be glad,  
And let the mourning ones again with robes  
of praise be clad.  
For He who cooled the furnace, and  
smoothed the stormy wave,  
And tamed the Chaldean lions, is mighty  
still to save!

1843.

## MASSACHUSETTS TO VIRGINIA<sup>1</sup>

THE blast from Freedom's Northern hills,  
upon its Southern way,  
Bears greeting to Virginia from Massachu-  
setts Bay:  
No word of haughty challenging, nor battle  
bugle's peal,  
Nor steady tread of marching files, nor  
clang of horsemen's steel,

No trains of deep-mouthed cannon along  
our highways go;  
Around our silent arsenals untrodden lies  
the snow;

<sup>1</sup> Written on reading an account of the proceedings of the citizens of Norfolk, Va., in reference to George Latimer, the alleged fugitive slave, who was seized in Boston without warrant at the request of James B. Grey, of Norfolk, claiming to be his master. The case caused great excitement North and South, and led to the presentation of a petition to Congress, signed by more than fifty thousand citizens of Massachusetts, calling for such laws and proposed amendments to the Constitution as should relieve the Commonwealth from all further participation in the crime of oppression. George Latimer himself was finally given free papers for the sum of four hundred dollars. (WHITTIER.)

When the excitement was at its height, conventions were held simultaneously in every county in Massachu-  
setts, and this poem was read at the Essex County con-  
vention. The most intense enthusiasm was aroused by  
those stanzas in which all the counties of the State  
speak successively, each in its own character.

And to the land-breeze of our ports, upon  
their errands far,  
A thousand sails of commerce swell, but  
none are spread for war.

We hear thy threats, Virginia ! thy stormy  
words and high  
Swell harshly on the Southern winds which  
melt along our sky;  
Yet not one brown, hard hand foregoes its<sup>10</sup>  
honest labor here,  
No hewer of our mountain oaks suspends  
his axe in fear.

Wild are the waves which lash the reefs  
along St. George's bank;  
Cold on the shores of Labrador the fog lies  
white and dank;  
Through storm, and wave, and blinding  
mist, stout are the hearts which  
man  
The fishing-smacks of Marblehead, the sea-  
boats of Cape Ann.

The cold north light and wintry sun glare  
on their icy forms,  
Bent grimly o'er their straining lines or  
wrestling with the storms;  
Free as the winds they drive before, rough  
as the waves they roam,  
They laugh to scorn the slaver's threat  
against their rocky home.<sup>20</sup>

What means the Old Dominion ? Hath  
she forgot the day  
When o'er her conquered valleys swept the  
Briton's steel array ?  
How, side by side with sons of hers, the  
Massachusetts men  
Encountered Tarleton's charge of fire, and  
stout Cornwallis, then ?

Forgets she how the Bay State, in answer  
to the call  
Of her old House of Burgesses, spoke out  
from Faneuil Hall ?  
When, echoing back her Henry's cry, came  
pulsing on each breath  
Of Northern winds the thrilling sounds of  
'Liberty or Death !'

What asks the Old Dominion ? If now  
her sons have proved  
False to their fathers' memory, false to the  
faith they loved;<sup>30</sup>

If she can scoff at Freedom, and its great  
charter spurn,  
Must we of Massachusetts from truth and  
duty turn ?

We hunt your bondmen, flying from Sla-  
very's hateful hell;  
Our voices, at your bidding, take up the  
bloodhound's yell;  
We gather, at your summons, above our  
fathers' graves,  
From Freedom's holy altar-horns to tear  
your wretched slaves !

Thank God ! not yet so vilely can Massa-  
chusetts bow;  
The spirit of her early time is with her even  
now;  
Dream not because her Pilgrim blood moves  
slow and calm and cool,  
She thus can stoop her chainless neck, a sis-  
ter's slave and tool !<sup>40</sup>

All that a sister State should do, all that a  
free State may,  
Heart, hand, and purse we proffer, as in our  
early day;  
But that one dark loathsome burden ye  
must stagger with alone,  
And reap the bitter harvest which ye your-  
selves have sown !

Hold, while ye may, your struggling slaves,  
and burden God's free air  
With woman's shriek beneath the lash, and  
manhood's wild despair;  
Cling closer to the 'cleaving curse' that  
writes upon your plains  
The blasting of Almighty wrath against a  
land of chains.

Still shame your gallant ancestry, the cava-  
liers of old,  
By watching round the shambles where hu-  
man flesh is sold;<sup>50</sup>  
Gloat o'er the new-born child, and count  
his market value, when  
The maddened mother's cry of woe shall  
pierce the slaver's den !

Lower than plummet soundeth, sink the  
Virginia name;  
Plant, if ye will, your fathers' graves with  
rankest weeds of shame;

Be, if ye will, the scandal of God's fair universe;  
We wash our hands forever of your sin and shame and curse.

A voice from lips whereon the coal from Freedom's shrine hath been,  
Thrilled, as but yesterday, the hearts of Berkshire's mountain men:  
The echoes of that solemn voice are sadly lingering still  
In all our sunny valleys, on every wind-swept hill. 60

And when the prowling man-thief came hunting for his prey  
Beneath the very shadow of Bunker's shaft of gray,  
How, through the free lips of the son, the father's warning spoke;  
How, from its bonds of trade and sect, the Pilgrim city broke!

A hundred thousand right arms were lifted up on high,  
A hundred thousand voices sent back their loud reply;  
Through the thronged towns of Essex the startling summons rang,  
And up from bench and loom and wheel her young mechanics sprang!

The voice of free, broad Middlesex, of thousands as of one,  
The shaft of Bunker calling to that of Lexington;  
From Norfolk's ancient villages, from Plymouth's rocky bound 70  
To where Nantucket feels the arms of ocean close her round;

From rich and rural Worcester, where through the calm repose  
Of cultured vales and fringing woods the gentle Nashua flows,  
To where Wachuset's wintry blasts the mountain larches stir,  
Swelled up to Heaven the thrilling cry of 'God save Latimer!'

And sandy Barnstable rose up, wet with the salt sea spray;  
And Bristol sent her answering shout down Narragansett Bay!

Along the broad Connecticut old Hampden felt the thrill,  
And the cheer of Hampshire's woodmen swept down from Holyoke Hill. 80

The voice of Massachusetts! Of her free sons and daughters,  
Deep calling unto deep aloud, the sound of many waters!  
Against the burden of that voice what tyrant power shall stand?  
No fetters in the Bay State! No slave upon her land!

Look to it well, Virginians! In calmness we have borne,  
In answer to our faith and trust, your insult and your scorn;  
You've spurned our kindest counsels; you've hunted for our lives;  
And shaken round our hearths and homes your manacles and gyves!

We wage no war, we lift no arm, we fling no torch within  
The fire-damps of the quaking mine beneath your soil of sin; 90  
We leave ye with your bondmen, to wrestle, while ye can,  
With the strong upward tendencies and godlike soul of man!

But for us and for our children, the vow which we have given  
For freedom and humanity is registered in heaven;  
No slave-hunt in our borders, — no pirate on our strand!  
No fetters in the Bay State, — no slave upon our land!

December, 1842.

January, 1843.

### THE CHRISTIAN SLAVE<sup>1</sup>

A CHRISTIAN! going, gone!  
Who bids for God's own image? for his grace,  
Which that poor victim of the market-place Hath in her suffering won?

<sup>1</sup> In a publication of L. F. Tassiro, *Random Shots and Southern Breezes*, is a description of a slave auction at New Orleans, at which the auctioneer recommended the woman on the stand as 'A GOOD CHRISTIAN!' It was not uncommon to see advertisements of slaves for sale, in which they were described as pious or as members of the church. In one advertisement a slave was noted as 'a Baptist preacher.' (WHITTIER.)

My God ! can such things be ?  
 Hast Thou not said that whatsoe'er is done  
 Unto thy weakest and thy humblest one  
 Is even done to Thee ?

In that sad victim, then,  
 Child of thy pitying love, I see Thee  
 stand;  
 Once more the jest-word of a mocking  
 band,  
 Bound, sold, and scourged again !

A Christian up for sale !  
 Wet with her blood your whips, o'ertask  
 her frame,  
 Make her life loathsome with your wrong  
 and shame,  
 Her patience shall not fail !

A heathen hand might deal  
 Back on your heads the gathered wrong of  
 years  
 But her low, broken prayer and nightly  
 tears  
 Ye neither heed nor feel. 20

Con well thy lesson o'er,  
 Thou prudent teacher, tell the toiling slave  
 No dangerous tale of Him who came to  
 save  
 The outcast and the poor.

But wisely shut the ray  
 Of God's free Gospel from her simple  
 heart,  
 And to her darkened mind alone impart  
 One stern command, Obey !

So shalt thou deftly raise  
 The market price of human flesh;<sup>1</sup> and  
 while 30  
 On thee, their pampered guest, the planters  
 smile,  
 Thy church shall praise.

Grave, reverend men shall tell  
 From Northern pulpits how thy work was  
 blest,

<sup>1</sup> There was at the time when this poem was written an Association in Liberty County, Georgia, for the religious instruction of negroes. One of their annual reports contains an address by the Rev. Josiah Spry Law, in which the following passage occurs: 'There is a growing interest in this community in the religious instruction of negroes. There is a conviction that religious instruction promotes the quiet and order of the people, and the pecuniary interest of the owners.' (WHITTIER.)

While in that vile South Sodom first and  
 best,  
 Thy poor disciples sell.

Oh, shame ! the Moslem thrall,  
 Who, with his master, to the Prophet  
 kneels,  
 While turning to the sacred Kebla feels  
 His fetters break and fall. 40

Cheers for the turbaned Bey  
 Of robber-peopled Tunis ! he hath torn  
 The dark slave-dungeons open, and hath  
 borne  
 Their inmates into day:

But our poor slave in vain  
 Turns to the Christian shrine his aching  
 eyes;  
 Its rites will only swell his market price,  
 And rivet on his chain.

God of all right ! how long  
 Shall priestly robbers at thine altar  
 stand, 50  
 Lifting in prayer to Thee the bloody hand  
 And haughty brow of wrong ?

Oh, from the fields of cane,  
 From the low rice-swamp, from the trader's  
 cell;  
 From the black slave-ship's foul and loath-  
 some hell,  
 And coffer's weary chain;

Hoarse, horrible, and strong,  
 Rises to Heaven that agonizing cry,  
 Filling the arches of the hollow sky,  
 How long, O God, how long ? 60  
 1843. 1843.

## THE SHOEMAKERS<sup>1</sup>

Ho ! workers of the old time styled  
 The Gentle Craft of Leather !

<sup>1</sup> In his *Songs of Labor*, though Whittier wrote with most sympathy of the two trades at which he had himself worked, shoemaking (cf. Carpenter's *Whittier*, pp. 39-41) and farming (see 'The Huskers,' p. 278), there are lines in others of the *Songs* which cannot be spared from any selection of his poetry. Such are these from 'The Lumbermen':—

Keep who will the city's alleys,  
 Take the smooth-shorn plain;  
 Give to us the cedarn valleys,  
 Rocks and hills of Maine !

Young brothers of the ancient guild,  
Stand forth once more together !  
Call out again your long array,  
In the olden merry manner !  
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,  
Fling out your blazoned banner !

Rap, rap ! upon the well-worn stone  
How falls the polished hammer ! 10  
Rap, rap ! the measured sound has grown  
A quick and merry clamor.  
Now shape the sole ! now deftly curl  
The glossy vamp around it,  
And bless the while the bright-eyed girl  
Whose gentle fingers bound it !

For you, along the Spanish main  
A hundred keels are ploughing ;  
For you, the Indian on the plain  
His lasso-coil is throwing ; 20  
For you, deep glens with hemlock dark  
The woodman's fire is lighting ;  
For you, upon the oak's gray bark,  
The woodman's axe is smiting.

For you, from Carolina's pine  
The rosin-gum is stealing ;  
For you, the dark-eyed Florentine  
Her silken skein is reeling ;  
For you, the dizzy goatherd roams  
His rugged Alpine ledges ; 30  
For you, round all her shepherd homes,  
Bloom England's thorny hedges.

The foremost still, by day or night,  
On moated mound or heather,  
Where'er the need of trampled right  
Brought toiling men together ;  
Where the free burghers from the wall  
Defied the mail-clad master,  
Than yours, at Freedom's trumpet-call,  
No craftsmen rallied faster. 40

Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,  
Ye heed no idle scorner ;  
Free hands and hearts are still your pride,

In our North-land, wild and woody,  
Let us still have part :  
Rugged nurse and mother sturdy,  
Hold us to thy heart !

or the beginning of 'The Drovers : ' —

Through heat and cold, and shower and sun,  
Still onward cheerly driving !  
There's life alone in duty done,  
And rest alone in striving.

See also the beautiful 'Dedication' of the *Songs of Labor*, p. 282.

And duty done your honor.  
Ye dare to trust, for honest fame,  
The jury Time empanels,  
And leave to truth each noble name  
Which glorifies your annals.

Thy songs, Hans Sachs, are living yet,  
In strong and hearty German ; 50  
And Bloomfield's lay, and Gifford's wit,  
And patriot fame of Sherman ;  
Still from his book, a mystic seer,  
The soul of Behmen teaches,  
And England's priestcraft shakes to hear  
Of Fox's leathern breeches.

The foot is yours ; where'er it falls,  
It treads your well-wrought leather,  
On earthen floor, in marble halls  
On carpet, or on heather. 60  
Still there the sweetest charm is found  
Of matron grace or vestal's,  
As Hebe's foot bore nectar round  
Among the old celestials !

Rap, rap ! — your stout and bluff bro-  
gan,  
With footsteps slow and weary,  
May wander where the sky's blue span  
Shuts down upon the prairie.  
On Beauty's foot your slippers glance,  
By Saratoga's fountains, 70  
Or twinkle down the summer dance  
Beneath the Crystal Mountains !

The red brick to the mason's hand,  
The brown earth to the tiller's,  
The shoe in yours shall wealth com-  
mand,  
Like fairy Cinderella's !  
As they who shunned the household  
maid  
Beheld the crown upon her,  
So all shall see your toil repaid  
With hearth and home and honor. 80

Then let the toast be freely quaffed,  
In water cool and brimming, —  
'All honor to the good old Craft,  
Its merry men and women !'  
Call out again your long array,  
In the old time's pleasant manner:  
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,  
Fling out his blazoned banner !

THE PINE TREE<sup>1</sup>

LIFT again the stately emblem on the Bay  
 State's rusted shield,  
 Give to Northern winds the Pine-Tree on  
 our banner's tattered field.  
 Sons of men who sat in council with their  
 Bibles round the board,  
 Answering England's royal missive with a  
 firm, 'Thus saith the Lord !'  
 Rise again for home and freedom ! set the  
 battle in array !  
 What the fathers did of old time we their  
 sons must do to-day.

Tell us not of banks and tariffs, cease your  
 paltry pedler cries;  
 Shall the good State sink her honor that  
 your gambling stocks may rise ?  
 Would ye barter man for cotton ? That  
 your gains may sum up higher,  
 Must we kiss the feet of Moloch, pass our  
 children through the fire ?  
 Is the dollar only real ? God and truth and  
 right a dream ?  
 Weighed against your lying ledgers must  
 our manhood kick the beam ?

O my God ! for that free spirit, which of  
 old in Boston town  
 Smote the Province House with terror,  
 struck the crest of Andros down !  
 For another strong-voiced Adams in the  
 city's streets to cry,  
 'Up for God and Massachusetts ! Set your  
 feet on Mammon's lie !  
 Perish banks and perish traffic, spin your  
 cotton's latest pound,  
 But in Heaven's name keep your honor, keep  
 the heart o' the Bay State sound !'

Where's the man for Massachusetts ?  
 Where's the voice to speak her free ?  
 Where's the hand to light up bonfires from  
 her mountains to the sea ?

<sup>1</sup> Written on hearing that the Anti-Slavery Resolves of Stephen C. Phillips had been rejected by the Whig Convention in Faneuil Hall, in 1846. (WHITTIER.)

Whittier sent the poem to Sumner in a letter in which he said : 'I have just read the proceedings of your Whig convention, and the lines enclosed are a feeble expression of my feelings. I look upon the rejection of Stephen C. Phillips's resolutions as an evidence that the end and aim of the managers of the convention was to go just far enough to scare the party and no farther. All thanks for the free voices of thyself, Phillips, Allen, and Adams. Notwithstanding the result you have not spoken in vain.' (Quoted in Pickard's *Life*, vol. 1, p. 316.)

Beats her Pilgrim pulse no longer ? Sits  
 she dumb in her despair ?  
 Has she none to break the silence ? Has  
 she none to do and dare ?  
 O my God ! for one right worthy to lift up  
 her rusted shield,  
 And to plant again the Pine-Tree in her  
 banner's tattered field !

1846.

1846.

## FORGIVENESS

My heart was heavy, for its trust had been  
 Abused, its kindness answered with foul  
 wrong;  
 So, turning gloomily from my fellow-men,  
 One summer Sabbath day I strolled among  
 The green mounds of the village burial-  
 place;  
 Where, pondering how all human love and  
 hate  
 Find one sad level; and how, soon or late,  
 Wronged and wrongdoer, each with meek-  
 ened face,  
 And cold hands folded over a still heart,  
 Pass the green threshold of our common  
 grave,  
 Whither all footsteps tend, whence none  
 depart,  
 Awed for myself, and pitying my race,  
 Our common sorrow, like a mighty wave,  
 Swept all my pride away, and trembling I  
 forgave !

1846 ?

BARCLAY OF URY<sup>2</sup>

UP the streets of Aberdeen,  
 By the kirk and college green,  
 Rode the Laird of Ury;

<sup>2</sup> Among the earliest converts to the doctrines of Friends in Scotland was Barclay of Ury, an old and distinguished soldier, who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus, in Germany. As a Quaker, he became the object of persecution and abuse at the hands of the magistrates and the populace. None bore the indignities of the mob with greater patience and nobleness of soul than this once proud gentleman and soldier. One of his friends, on an occasion of uncommon rudeness, lamented that he should be treated so harshly in his old age who had been so honored before. 'I find more satisfaction,' said Barclay, 'as well as honor, in being thus insulted for my religious principles, than when, a few years ago, it was usual for the magistrates, as I passed the city of Aberdeen, to meet me on the road and conduct me to public entertainment in their hall, and then escort me out again, to gain my favor.' (WHITTIER.)

Close behind him, close beside,  
Foul of mouth and evil-eyed,  
    Pressed the mob in fury.

Flouted him the drunken churl,  
Jeered at him the serving-girl,  
    Prompt to please her master;  
And the begging carlin, late  
Fed and clothed at Ury's gate,  
    Cursed him as he passed her.

Yet, with calm and stately mien,  
Up the streets of Aberdeen  
    Came he slowly riding;  
And, to all he saw and heard,  
Answering not with bitter word,  
    Turning not for chiding.

Came a troop with broadswords swinging,  
Bits and bridles sharply ringing,  
    Loose and free and froward;  
Quoth the foremost, 'Ride him down!  
Push him! prick him! through the town  
    Drive the Quaker coward!'

But from out the thickening crowd  
Cried a sudden voice and loud:  
    'Barclay! Ho! a Barclay!'  
And the old man at his side  
Saw a comrade, battle tried,  
    Scarred and sunburned darkly,

Who with ready weapon bare,  
Fronting to the troopers there,  
    Cried aloud: 'God save us,  
Call ye coward him who stood  
Ankle deep in Lützen's blood,  
    With the brave Gustavus?'

'Nay, I do not need thy sword,  
Comrade mine,' said Ury's lord.  
    'Put it up, I pray thee:  
Passive to his holy will,  
Trust I in my Master still,  
    Even though He slay me.

'Pledges of thy love and faith,  
Proved on many a field of death,  
    Not by me are needed.'  
Marvelled much that henchman bold,  
That his laird, so stout of old,  
    Now so meekly pleaded.

'Woe's the day!' he sadly said,  
With a slowly shaking head,

And a look of pity;  
'Ury's honest lord reviled,  
Mock of knave and sport of child,  
    In his own good city!

'Speak the word, and, master mine,  
As we charged on Tilly's line,<sup>1</sup>  
    And his Walloon lancers,  
Smiting through their midst we'll teach  
Civil look and decent speech  
    To these boyish prancers!'

'Marvel not, mine ancient friend,  
Like beginning, like the end,'  
    Quoth the Laird of Ury;  
'Is the sinful servant more  
Than his gracious Lord who bore  
    Bonds and stripes in Jewry?

'Give me joy that in his name  
I can bear, with patient frame,  
    All these vain ones offer;  
While for them He suffereth long,  
Shall I answer wrong with wrong,  
    Scoffing with the scoffer?

'Happier I, with loss of all,  
Hunted, outlawed, held in thrall,  
    With few friends to greet me,  
Than when reeve and squire were seen,  
Riding out from Aberdeen,  
    With bared heads to meet me.

'When each goodwife, o'er and o'er,  
Blessed me as I passed her door;  
    And the snooded daughter,  
Through her casement glancing down,  
Smiled on him who bore renown  
    From red fields of slaughter.

'Hard to feel the stranger's scoff,  
Hard the old friend's falling off,  
    Hard to learn forgiving;  
But the Lord his own rewards,  
And his love with theirs accords,  
    Warm and fresh and living.

'Through this dark and stormy night  
Faith beholds a feeble light  
    Up the blackness streaking;

<sup>1</sup> The barbarities of Count De Tilly after the siege of Magdeburg made such an impression upon our forefathers that the phrase 'like old Tilly' is still heard sometimes in New England of any piece of special ferocity. (WHITTIER.)



Knowing God's own time is best,  
In a patient hope I rest  
For the full day-breaking !'

So the Laird of Ury said,  
Turning slow his horse's head  
Towards the Tolbooth prison,  
Where, through iron gates, he heard 100  
Poor disciples of the Word  
Preach of Christ arisen !

Not in vain, Confessor old,  
Unto us the tale is told  
Of thy day of trial;  
Every age on him who strays  
From its broad and beaten ways  
Pours its seven-fold vial.

Happy he whose inward ear  
Angel comfortings can hear, 110  
O'er the rabble's laughter;  
And while Hatred's fagots burn,  
Glimpses through the smoke discern  
Of the good hereafter.

Knowing this, that never yet  
Share of Truth was vainly set  
In the world's wide fallow;  
After hands shall sow the seed,  
After hands from hill and mead  
Reap the harvests yellow. 120

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,  
Must the moral pioneer  
From the Future borrow;  
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,  
And, on midnight's sky of rain,  
Paint the golden morrow ! 1847.

## THE ANGELS OF BUENA VISTA<sup>1</sup>

SPEAK and tell us, our Ximena, looking  
northward far away,  
O'er the camp of the invaders, o'er the  
Mexican array,

<sup>1</sup> A letter-writer from Mexico during the Mexican War, when detailing some of the incidents at the terrible fight of Buena Vista, mentioned that Mexican women were seen hovering near the field of death, for the purpose of giving aid and succor to the wounded. One poor woman was found surrounded by the maimed and suffering of both armies, ministering to the wants of Americans as well as Mexicans with impartial tenderness. (WHITTIER.)

Who is losing ? who is winning ? are they  
far or come they near ?  
Look abroad, and tell us, sister, whither  
rolls the storm we hear.

'Down the hills of Angostura still the storm  
of battle rolls;  
Blood is flowing, men are dying; God have  
mercy on their souls !'  
Who is losing ? who is winning ? 'Over  
hill and over plain,  
I see but smoke of cannon clouding through  
the mountain rain.'

Holy Mother ! keep our brothers ! Look,  
Ximena, look once more.  
'Still I see the fearful whirlwind rolling  
darkly as before, 10  
Bearing on, in strange confusion, friend and  
foeman, foot and horse,  
Like some wild and troubled torrent sweep-  
ing down its mountain course.'

Look forth once more, Ximena ! 'Ah ! the  
smoke has rolled away;  
And I see the Northern rifles gleaming  
down the ranks of gray.  
Hark ! that sudden blast of bugles ! there  
the troop of Minon wheels;  
There the Northern horses thunder, with  
the cannon at their heels.

'Jesu, pity ! how it thickens ! now retreat  
and now advance !  
Right against the blazing cannon shivers  
Puebla's charging lance !  
Down they go, the brave young riders;  
horse and foot together fall;  
Like a ploughshare in the fallow, through  
them ploughs the Northern ball.' 20

Nearer came the storm and nearer, rolling  
fast and frightful on !  
Speak, Ximena, speak and tell us, who has  
lost, and who has won ?  
'Alas ! alas ! I know not; friend and foe  
together fall,  
O'er the dying rush the living: pray, my  
sisters, for them all !

'Lo ! the wind the smoke is lifting.  
Blessed Mother, save my brain !  
I can see the wounded crawling slowly out  
from heaps of slain.

Now they stagger, blind and bleeding; now  
they fall, and strive to rise;  
Hasten, sisters, haste and save them, lest  
they die before our eyes!

'O my heart's love! O my dear one! lay  
thy poor head on my knee;  
Dost thou know the lips that kiss thee?  
Canst thou hear me? canst thou  
see? <sup>30</sup>  
O my husband, brave and gentle! O my  
Bernal, look once more  
On the blessed cross before thee! Mercy!  
mercy! all is o'er!'

Dry thy tears, my poor Ximena; lay thy  
dear one down to rest;  
Let his hands be meekly folded, lay the  
cross upon his breast;  
Let his dirge be sung hereafter, and his  
funeral masses said;  
To-day, thou poor bereaved one, the living  
ask thy aid.

Close beside her, faintly moaning, fair and  
young, a soldier lay,  
Torn with shot and pierced with lances,  
bleeding slow his life away;  
But, as tenderly before him the lorn Ximena  
knelt,  
She saw the Northern eagle shining on his  
pistol-belt. <sup>40</sup>

With a stifled cry of horror straight she  
turned away her head;  
With a sad and bitter feeling looked she  
back upon her dead;  
But she heard the youth's low moaning, and  
his struggling breath of pain,  
And she raised the cooling water to his  
 parching lips again.

Whispered low the dying soldier, pressed  
her hand and faintly smiled;  
Was that pitying face his mother's? did  
she watch beside her child?  
All his stranger words with meaning her  
woman's heart supplied;  
With her kiss upon his forehead, 'Mother!'  
murmured he, and died!

'A bitter curse upon them, poor boy, who  
led thee forth,  
From some gentle, sad-eyed mother, weep-  
ing, lonely, in the North!' <sup>50</sup>

Spake the mournful Mexic woman, as she  
laid him with her dead,  
And turned to soothe the living, and bind  
the wounds which bled.

Look forth once more, Ximena! 'Like a  
cloud before the wind  
Rolls the battle down the mountains,  
leaving blood and death be-  
hind;  
Ah! they plead in vain for mercy; in the  
dust the wounded strive;  
Hide your faces, holy angels! O thou  
Christ of God, forgive!'

Sink, O Night, among thy mountains! let  
the cool, gray shadows fall;  
Dying brothers, fighting demons, drop thy  
curtain over all!  
Through the thickening winter twilight,  
wide apart the battle rolled,  
In the sheath the sabre rested, and the can-  
non's lips grew cold. <sup>60</sup>

But the noble Mexic women still their holy  
task pursued,  
Through that long, dark night of sor-  
row, worn and faint and lacking  
food.  
Over weak and suffering brothers, with a  
tender care they hung,  
And the dying foeman blessed them in a  
strange and Northern tongue.

Not wholly lost, O Father! is this evil  
world of ours;  
Upward, through its blood and ashes, spring  
afresh the Eden flowers;  
From its smoking hell of battle, Love and  
Pity send their prayer,  
And still thy white-winged angels hover  
dimly in our air!

1847.

### THE HUSKERS

It was late in mild October, and the long  
autumnal rain  
Had left the summer harvest-fields all  
green with grass again;  
The first sharp frosts had fallen, leaving all  
the woodlands gay  
With the hues of summer's rainbow, or the  
meadow-flowers of May.

Through a thin, dry mist, that morning, the  
 sun rose broad and red,  
 At first a rayless disk of fire, he brightened  
 as he sped ;  
 Yet even his noontide glory fell chastened  
 and subdued,  
 On the cornfields and the orchards and  
 softly pictured wood.

And all that quiet afternoon, slow sloping  
 to the night,  
 He wove with golden shuttle the haze with  
 yellow light ;  
 Slanting through the painted beeches, he  
 glorified the hill ;  
 And, beneath it, pond and meadow lay  
 brighter, greener still.

And shouting boys in woodland haunts  
 caught glimpses of that sky,  
 Flecked by the many-tinted leaves, and  
 laughed, they knew not why ;  
 And school-girls, gay with aster-flowers,  
 beside the meadow brooks,  
 Mingled the glow of autumn with the sun-  
 shine of sweet looks.

From spire and barn looked westerly the  
 patient weathercocks ;  
 But even the birches on the hill stood mo-  
 tionless as rocks.  
 No sound was in the woodlands, save the  
 squirrel's dropping shell,  
 And the yellow leaves among the boughs,  
 low rustling as they fell. 20

The summer grains were harvested ; the  
 stubble-fields lay dry,  
 Where June winds rolled, in light and  
 shade, the pale green waves of  
 rye ;  
 But still, on gentle hill-slopes, in valleys  
 fringed with wood,  
 Ungathered, bleaching in the sun, the heavy  
 corn crop stood.

Bent low, by autumn's wind and rain,  
 through husks that, dry and sere,  
 Unfolded from their ripened charge, shone  
 out the yellow ear ;  
 Beneath, the turnip lay concealed, in many  
 a verdant fold,  
 And glistened in the slanting light the  
 pumpkin's sphere of gold.

There wrought the busy harvesters ; and  
 many a creaking wain  
 Bore slowly to the long barn-floor its load  
 of husk and grain ;  
 Till broad and red, as when he rose, the  
 sun sank down, at last,  
 And like a merry guest's farewell, the day  
 in brightness passed.

And lo ! as through the western pines, on  
 meadow, stream, and pond,  
 Flamed the red radiance of a sky, set all  
 afire beyond,  
 Slowly o'er the eastern sea-bluffs a milder  
 glory shone,  
 And the sunset and the moonrise were  
 mingled into one !

As thus into the quiet night the twilight  
 lapsed away,  
 And deeper in the brightening moon the  
 tranquil shadows lay ;  
 From many a brown old farm-house, and  
 hamlet without name,  
 Their milking and their home-tasks done,  
 the merry huskers came. 40

Swung o'er the heaped-up harvest, from  
 pitchforks in the mow,  
 Shone dimly down the lanterns on the  
 pleasant scene below ;  
 The growing pile of husks behind, the  
 golden ears before,  
 And laughing eyes and busy hands  
 and brown cheeks glimmering  
 o'er.

Half hidden, in a quiet nook, serene of look  
 and heart,  
 Talking their old times over, the old' men  
 sat apart ;  
 While up and down the unhusked pile, or  
 nestling in its shade,  
 At hide-and-seek, with laugh and shout,  
 the happy children played.

Urged by the good host's daughter, a  
 maiden young and fair,  
 Lifting to light her sweet blue eyes and  
 pride of soft brown hair,  
 The master of the village school, sleek of  
 hair and smooth of tongue,  
 To the quaint tune of some old psalm, a  
 husking-ballad sung. 50

## THE CORN SONG

Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard !  
 Heap high the golden corn !  
 No richer gift has Autumn poured  
 From out her lavish horn !

Let other lands, exulting, glean  
 The apple from the pine,  
 The orange from its glossy green,  
 The cluster from the vine ;

60

We better love the hardy gift  
 Our rugged vales bestow,  
 To cheer us when the storm shall drift  
 Our harvest-fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and meads of flowers  
 Our ploughs their furrows made,  
 While on the hills the sun and showers  
 Of changeful April played.

We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain  
 Beneath the sun of May,  
 And frightened from our sprouting grain  
 The robber crows away.

70

All through the long, bright days of June  
 Its leaves grew green and fair,  
 And waved in hot midsummer's noon  
 Its soft and yellow hair.

And now, with autumn's moonlit eves,  
 Its harvest-time has come,  
 We pluck away the frosted leaves,  
 And bear the treasure home.

80

There, when the snows about us drift,  
 And winter winds are cold,  
 Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,  
 And knead its meal of gold.

Let vapid idlers loll in silk  
 Around their costly board;  
 Give us the bowl of samp and milk,  
 By homespun beauty poured !

Where'er the wide old kitchen hearth  
 Sends up its smoky curls,  
 Who will not thank the kindly earth,  
 And bless our farmer girls !

90

Then shame on all the proud and vain,  
 Whose folly laughs to scorn  
 The blessing of our hardy grain,  
 Our wealth of golden corn !

Let earth withhold her goodly root,  
 Let mildew blight the rye,  
 Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,  
 The wheat-field to the fly :

100

But let the good old crop adorn  
 The hills our fathers trod ;  
 Still let us, for his golden corn,  
 Send up our thanks to God !

1847.

PROEM<sup>1</sup>

I LOVE the old melodious lays  
 Which softly melt the ages through,  
 The songs of Spenser's golden days,  
 Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,  
 Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest  
 morning dew.

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours  
 To breathe their marvellous notes I try;  
 I feel them, as the leaves and flowers  
 In silence feel the dewy showers,  
 And drink with glad, still lips the blessing  
 of the sky.

10

The rigor of a frozen clime,  
 The harshness of an untaught ear,  
 The jarring words of one whose rhyme  
 Beat often Labor's hurried time,  
 Or Duty's rugged march through storm  
 and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,  
 No rounded art the lack supplies;  
 Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,  
 Or softer shades of Nature's face,  
 I view her common forms with unanointed  
 eyes.

20

Nor mine the seer-like power to show  
 The secrets of the heart and mind;  
 To drop the plummet-line below  
 Our common world of joy and woe,  
 A more intense despair or brighter hope to  
 find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense  
 Of human right and weal is shown;

<sup>1</sup> The first important collected edition of Whittier's poems was a large and beautiful volume published in 1848 (dated 1840). This 'Proem' was written to introduce it.

A hate of tyranny intense,  
And hearty in its vehemence,  
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were  
my own. 30

O Freedom ! if to me belong  
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,  
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,  
Still with a love as deep and strong  
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on  
thy shrine !

1847.

1848.

### THE LAKESIDE

THE shadows round the inland sea  
Are deepening into night;  
Slow up the slopes of Ossipee  
They chase the lessening light.  
Tired of the long day's blinding heat,  
I rest my languid eye,  
Lake of the Hills ! where, cool and sweet,  
Thy sunset waters lie !<sup>1</sup>

Along the sky, in wavy lines,  
O'er isle and reach and bay, 10  
Green-belted with eternal pines,  
The mountains stretch away.  
Below, the maple masses sleep  
Where shore with water blends,  
While midway on the tranquil deep  
The evening light descends.

So seemed it when yon hill's red crown,<sup>2</sup>  
Of old, the Indian trod,  
And, through the sunset air, looked down  
Upon the Smile of God.<sup>3</sup> 20  
To him of light and shade the laws  
No forest skeptic taught;

<sup>1</sup> The 'Lake of the Hills' is Lake Winnepesaukee. One of Whittier's favorite resorts was West Ossipee, at the foot of the Ossipee Mountains, just northeast of the lake. See Pickard's *Whittier-Land*, pp. 109-115; his *Life of Whittier*, vol. II, p. 669; and Whittier's 'Among the Hills' and 'Summer by the Lakeside.'

<sup>2</sup> Mt. Chocorua, north of West Ossipee, the most picturesque, though by no means the highest, of the mountains of New England. Its cone is formed of a peculiar reddish stone known as 'Chocorua granite.' For the legend of the Indian chief from whom it was named, see Thomas Starr King's *The White Hills*, or Sweetser's *White Mountains*, p. 341. See also Whittier's 'How They Climbed Chocorua' in *Whittier-Land*, pp. 111-114. One of Longfellow's early poems, 'Jec-koyva,' had the Indian chief Chocorua for its hero.

<sup>3</sup> The name Winnepesaukee is popularly thought to mean 'The Smile of the Great Spirit.' Students of the Indian languages, however, agree that its real meaning is 'Beautiful Water in a High Place.'

Their living and eternal Cause  
His truer instinct sought.

He saw these mountains in the light  
Which now across them shines ;  
This lake, in summer sunset bright,  
Walled round with sombering pines.  
God near him seemed; from earth and skies  
His loving voice he heard, 30  
As, face to face, in Paradise,  
Man stood before the Lord.

Thanks, O our Father ! that, like him,  
Thy tender love I see,  
In radiant hill and woodland dim,  
And tinted sunset sea.  
For not in mockery dost Thou fill  
Our earth with light and grace;  
Thou hid'st no dark and cruel will  
Behind Thy smiling face ! 40

1849.

### OUR STATE<sup>1</sup>

THE South-land boasts its teeming cane,  
The prairied West its heavy grain,  
And sunset's radiant gates unfold  
On rising marts and sands of gold !

Rough, bleak, and hard, our little State  
Is scant of soil, of limits strait;  
Her yellow sands are sands alone,  
Her only mines are ice and stone !

From Autumn frost to April rain,  
Too long her winter woods complain;  
From budding flower to falling leaf,  
Her summer time is all too brief.

Yet, on her rocks, and on her sands,  
And wintry hills, the school-house stands,  
And what her rugged soil denies,  
The harvest of the mind supplies.

The riches of the Commonwealth  
Are free, strong minds, and hearts of health;  
And more to her than gold or grain,  
The cunning hand and cultured brain.

For well she keeps her ancient stock,  
The stubborn strength of Pilgrim Rock;  
And still maintains, with milder laws,  
And clearer light, the Good Old Cause !

<sup>1</sup> Originally called 'Dedication of a School-house.'

Nor heeds the skeptic's puny hands,  
While near her school the church-spire  
stands;  
Nor fears the blinded bigot's rule,  
While near her church-spire stands the  
school.

1849.

### ICHABOD<sup>1</sup>

So fallen ! so lost ! the light withdrawn  
Which once he wore !  
The glory from his gray hairs gone  
Forevermore !

Reville him not, the Tempter hath  
A snare for all ;

<sup>1</sup> This poem was the outcome of the surprise and grief and forecast of evil consequences which I felt on reading the Seventh of March speech of Daniel Webster in support of the 'Compromise,' and the Fugitive Slave Law. No partisan or personal enmity dictated it. On the contrary my admiration of the splendid personality and intellectual power of the great senator was never stronger than when I laid down his speech, and, in one of the saddest moments of my life, penned my protest. . . .

But death softens all resentments, and the consciousness of a common inheritance of frailty and weakness modifies the severity of judgment. Years after, in 'The Lost Occasion,' I gave utterance to an almost universal regret that the great statesman did not live to see the flag which he loved trampled under the feet of Slavery, and, in view of this desecration, make his last days glorious in defence of 'Liberty and Union, one and inseparable.' (WHITTIER.)

'Ichabod' and 'The Lost Occasion' (p. 348) should necessarily be read together. The best possible comment on the two poems, from the point of view of to-day, is that of Professor Carpenter: 'Those whom Whittier knew best in later life relate that he came eventually to feel that Webster was perhaps right and he wrong; that compromise meant weary years of waiting, but that the further and consistent pursuit of such a policy might have successfully avoided the evils of war and of reconstruction. However that may be, the verses [of 'Ichabod'] are, in their awful scorn, the most powerful that he ever wrote. Right or wrong, he spoke for a great part of the North and West, nay, for the world. For the poem, in much the same fashion as Browning's 'Lost Leader,' is becoming disassociated with any special name, and may thus remain a most remarkable expression — the most terrible in our literature — of the aversion which any mass of people may feel, especially in a democracy, for the once-worshipped leader whose acts and words, in matters of the greatest public weal, seem to retrograde.' (Carpenter's *Whittier*, pp. 221-222.)

Compare Emerson's 'Webster,' p. 61, and the note on it; and Holmes's 'The Statesman's Secret,' and 'The Birthday of Daniel Webster.' See also Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. i, pp. 327-328.

For the meaning of the title, see 1 Samuel iv, 19-22: 'And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel.' It may have been suggested by an anonymous article of Lowell's on Daniel Webster, in the *Anti-Slavery Standard* (June, 1846), in which he says: 'Shall not the Recording Angel write *Ichabod* after the name of this man in the great book of Doom?' (Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. i, p. 201.)

And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,  
Befit his fall !

Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,  
When he who might  
Have lighted up and led his age,  
Falls back in night.

20

Scorn ! would the angels laugh, to mark  
A bright soul driven,  
Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,  
From hope and heaven !

Let not the land once proud of him  
Insult him now,  
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,  
Dishonored brow.

20

But let its humbled sons, instead,  
From sea to lake,  
A long lament, as for the dead,  
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught  
Save power remains ;  
A fallen angel's pride of thought,  
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone ; from those great eyes  
The soul has fled :  
When faith is lost, when honor dies,  
The man is dead !

30

Then pay the reverence of old days  
To his dead fame ;  
Walk backward, with averted gaze,  
And hide the shame !

1850.

1850.

### SONGS OF LABOR, DEDICATION

I WOULD the gift I offer here  
Might grace from thy favor take,  
And, seen through Friendship's atmosphere,  
On softened lines and coloring, wear  
The unaccustomed light of beauty, for thy  
sake.

Few leaves of Fancy's spring remain :  
But what I have I give to thee,  
The o'er-sunned bloom of summer's plain,  
And paler flowers, the latter rain  
Calls from the westering slope of life's  
autumnal lea.

10

Above the fallen groves of green,  
Where youth's enchanted forest stood  
Dry root and mossèd trunk between,  
A sober after-growth is seen,  
As springs the pine where falls the gay-  
leafed maple wood !

Yet birds will sing, and breezes play  
Their leaf-harps in the sombre tree;  
And through the bleak and wintry  
day  
It keeps its steady green alway, —  
So, even my after-thoughts may have a  
charm for thee. 20

Art's perfect forms no moral need,  
And beauty is its own excuse;<sup>1</sup>  
But for the dull and flowerless weed  
Some healing virtue still must plead,  
And the rough ore must find its honors in  
its use.

So haply these, my simple lays  
Of homely toil, may serve to show  
The orchard bloom and tasselled maize  
That skirt and gladden duty's ways,  
The unsung beauty hid life's common  
things below. 30

Haply from them the toiler, bent  
Above his forge or plough, may gain  
A manlier spirit of content,  
And feel that life is wisest spent  
Where the strong working hand makes  
strong the working brain.

The doom which to the guilty pair  
Without the walls of Eden came,  
Transforming sinless ease to care  
And rugged toil, no more shall bear  
The burden of old crime, or mark of pri-  
mal shame. 40

A blessing now, a curse no more ;  
Since He, whose name we breathe with  
awe,  
The coarse mechanic vesture wore,  
A poor man toiling with the poor,  
In labor, as in prayer, fulfilling the same  
law.

1850.

<sup>1</sup> For the idea of this line, I am indebted to Emerson, in his inimitable sonnet to the Rhodora, —

If eyes were made for seeing,  
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being.  
(WHITTIER.)

## WORDSWORTH

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF OF HIS  
MEMOIRS

DEAR friends, who read the world aright,  
And in its common forms discern  
A beauty and a harmony  
The many never learn !

Kindred in soul of him who found  
In simple flower and leaf and stone  
The impulse of the sweetest lays  
Our Saxon tongue has known, —

Accept this record of a life  
As sweet and pure, as calm and good,  
As a long day of blandest June  
In green field and in wood.

How welcome to our ears, long pained  
By strife of sect and party noise,  
The brook-like murmur of his song  
Of nature's simple joys !

The violet by its mossy stone,  
The primrose by the river's brim,  
And chance-sown daffodil, have found  
Immortal life through him.

The sunrise on his breezy lake,  
The rosy tints his sunset brought,  
World-seen, are gladdening all the vales  
And mountain-peaks of thought.

Art builds on sand; the works of pride  
And human passion change and fall;  
But that which shares the life of God  
With Him surviveth all.

1831.

## BENEDICITE

GOD's love and peace be with thee, where  
Soe'er this soft autumnal air  
Lifts the dark tresses of thy hair !

Whether through city casements comes  
Its kiss to thee, in crowded rooms,  
Or, out among the woodland blooms,

It freshens o'er thy thoughtful face,  
Imparting, in its glad embrace,  
Beauty to beauty, grace to grace !



Fair Nature's book together read, 10  
The old wood-paths that knew our tread,  
The maple shadows overhead, —

The hills we climbed, the river seen  
By gleams along its deep ravine, —  
All keep thy memory fresh and green.

Where'er I look, where'er I stray,  
Thy thought goes with me on my way,  
And hence the prayer I breathe to-day;

O'er lapse of time and change of scene,  
The weary waste which lies between 20  
Thyself and me, my heart I lean.

Thou lack'st not Friendship's spell-word, nor  
The half-unconscious power to draw  
All hearts to thine by Love's sweet law.

With these good gifts of God is cast  
Thy lot, and many a charm thou hast  
To hold the blessed angels fast.

If, then, a fervent wish for thee  
The gracious heavens will heed from me,  
What should, dear heart, its burden be? 30

The sighing of a shaken reed, —  
What can I more than meekly plead  
The greatness of our common need?

God's love, — unchanging, pure, and true, —  
The Paraclete white-shining through  
His peace, — the fall of Hermon's dew!

With such a prayer, on this sweet day,  
As thou mayst hear and I may say,  
I greet thee dearest, far away!

1851.

### APRIL

The spring comes slowly up this way. — *Christabel*.

'T is the noon of the spring-time, yet never  
a bird  
In the wind-shaken elm or the maple is  
heard;  
For green meadow-grasses wide levels of  
snow,  
And blowing of drifts where the crocus  
should blow;  
Where wind-flower and violet, amber and  
white,

On south-sloping brooksides should smile  
in the light,  
O'er the cold winter-beds of their late-  
waking roots

The frosty flake eddies, the ice-crystal  
shoots;

And, longing for light, under wind-driven  
heaps,

'Round the boles of the pine-wood the  
ground-laurel creeps, 10

Unkissed of the sunshine, unbaptized of  
showers,

With buds scarcely swelled, which should  
burst into flowers!

We wait for thy coming, sweet wind of the  
south!

For the touch of thy light wings, the kiss  
of thy mouth;

For the yearly evangel thou bearest from  
God,

Resurrection and life to the graves of the  
sod!

Up our long river-valley, for days, have not  
ceased

The wail and the shriek of the bitter north-  
east,

Raw and chill, as if winnowed through ices  
and snow,

All the way from the land of the wild Es-  
quimaux, 20

Until all our dreams of the land of the  
blest,

Like that red hunter's, turn to the sunny  
southwest.

O soul of the spring-time, its light and its  
breath,

Bring warmth to this coldness, bring life  
to this death;

Renew the great miracle; let us behold  
The stone from the mouth of the sepulchre

rolled,  
And Nature, like Lazarus, rise, as of old!

Let our faith, which in darkness and cold-  
ness has lain,

Revive with the warmth and the brightness  
again,

And in blooming of flower and budding of  
tree 30

The symbols and types of our destiny  
see;

The life of the spring-time, the life of the  
whole,

And, as sun to the sleeping earth, love to  
the soul!

1852.

## ASTRÆA

Jove means to settle  
Astræa in her seat again,  
And let down from his golden chain  
An age of better metal.

BEN JONSON, 1615.

O POET rare and old !  
Thy words are prophecies;  
Forward the age of gold,  
The new Saturnian lies.

The universal prayer  
And hope are not in vain;  
Rise, brothers ! and prepare  
The way for Saturn's reign.

Perish shall all which takes  
From labor's board and can;  
Perish shall all which makes  
A spaniel of the man !

Free from its bonds the mind,  
The body from the rod;  
Broken all chains that bind  
The image of our God.

Just men no longer pine  
Behind their prison-bars;  
Through the rent dungeon shine  
The free sun and the stars.

Earth own, at last, untrod  
By sect, or caste, or clan,  
The fatherhood of God,  
The brotherhood of man !

Fraud fail, craft perish, forth  
The money-changers driven,  
And God's will done on earth,  
As now in heaven !

1852.

## FIRST-DAY THOUGHTS

In calm and cool and silence, once again  
I find my old accustomed place among  
My brethren, where, perchance, no hu-  
man tongue  
Shall utter words ; where never hymn is  
sung,  
Nor deep-toned organ blown, nor censer  
swung,  
Nor dim light falling through the pictured  
pane !

There, syllabled by silence, let me hear  
The still small voice which reached the  
prophet's ear;  
Read in my heart a still diviner law  
Than Israel's leader on his tables saw !  
There let me strive with each besetting  
sin,  
Recall my wandering fancies, and re-  
strain  
The sore disquiet of a restless brain;  
And, as the path of duty is made plain,  
May grace be given that I may walk  
therein,  
Not like the hireling, for his selfish  
gain,  
With backward glances and reluctant tread,  
Making a merit of his coward dread,  
But, cheerful, in the light around me  
thrown,  
Walking as one to pleasant service led;  
Doing God's will as if it were my own,  
Yet trusting not in mine, but in his strength  
alone !

1852.

## THE POOR VOTER ON ELECTION DAY

THE proudest now is but my peer,  
The highest not more high ;  
To-day, of all the weary year,  
A king of men am I.  
To-day alike are great and small,  
The nameless and the known;  
My palace is the people's hall,  
The ballot-box my throne !

Who serves to-day upon the list  
Beside the served shall stand;  
Alike the brown and wrinkled fist,  
The gloved and dainty hand !  
The rich is level with the poor,  
The weak is strong to-day;  
And sleekest broadcloth counts no more  
Than homespun frock of gray.

10

To-day let pomp and vain pretence  
My stubborn right abide;  
I set a plain man's common sense  
Against the pedant's pride.  
To-day shall simple manhood try  
The strength of gold and land ;  
The wide world has not wealth to buy  
The power in my right hand !

20

While there's a grief to seek redress,  
 Or balance to adjust,  
 Where weighs our living manhood less  
 Than Mammon's vilest dust, —  
 While there's a right to need my vote,  
 A wrong to sweep away, 30  
 Up! clouted knee and ragged coat!  
 A man's a man to-day!

1852.

SUMMER BY THE LAKESIDE<sup>1</sup>

## LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE

## I. NOON

White clouds, whose shadows haunt the  
 deep,  
 Light mists, whose soft embraces keep  
 The sunshine on the hills asleep!

O isles of calm! O dark, still wood!  
 And stiller skies that overbrood  
 Your rest with deeper quietude!

O shapes and hues, dim beckoning, through  
 Yon mountain gaps, my longing view  
 Beyond the purple and the blue,

To stiller sea and greener land, 10  
 And softer lights and airs more bland,  
 And skies, — the hollow of God's hand!

Transfused through you, O mountain  
 friends!  
 With mine your solemn spirit blends,  
 And life no more hath separate ends.

I read each misty mountain sign,  
 I know the voice of wave and pine,  
 And I am yours, and ye are mine.

Life's burdens fall, its discords cease,  
 I lapse into the glad release 20  
 Of Nature's own exceeding peace.

O welcome calm of heart and mind!  
 As falls yon fir-tree's loosened rind  
 To leave a tenderer growth behind,

So fall the weary years away;  
 A child again, my head I lay  
 Upon the lap of this sweet day.

<sup>1</sup> See the note on 'The Lakeside,' p. 281.

This western wind bath Lethean powers,  
 Yon noonday cloud nepenthe showers,  
 The lake is white with lotus-flowers!

Even Duty's voice is faint and low,  
 And slumberous Conscience, waking slow,  
 Forgets her blotted scroll to show.

The Shadow which pursues us all,  
 Whose ever-nearing steps appall,  
 Whose voice we hear behind us call, —

That Shadow blends with mountain gray,  
 It speaks but what the light waves say, —  
 Death walks apart from Fear to-day!

Rocked on her breast, these pines and I 4  
 Alike on Nature's love rely;  
 And equal seems to live or die.

Assured that He whose presence fills  
 With light the spaces of these hills  
 No evil to His creatures wills,

The simple faith remains, that He  
 Will do, whatever that may be,  
 The best alike for man and tree,

What mosses over one shall grow,  
 What light and life the other know, 5  
 Unanxious, leaving Him to show.

## II. EVENING

Yon mountain's side is black with night,  
 While, broad-orbed, o'er its gleaming  
 crown  
 The moon, slow-rounding into sight,  
 On the hushed inland sea looks down.

How start to light the clustering isles,<sup>1</sup>  
 Each silver-hemmed! How sharply  
 show  
 The shadows of their rocky piles,  
 And tree-tops in the wave below!

How far and strange the mountains seem, 60  
 Dim-looming through the pale, still  
 light!  
 The vague, vast grouping of a dream,  
 They stretch into the solemn night.

Beneath, lake, wood, and peopled vale,  
 Hushed by that presence grand and grave,

<sup>1</sup> There are some three hundred islands in Lake Winnepesaukee.

Are silent, save the cricket's wail,  
And low response of leaf and wave.

Fair scenes! whereto the Day and Night  
Make rival love, I leave ye soon,  
What time before the eastern light 70  
The pale ghost of the setting moon

Shall hide behind yon rocky spines,  
And the young archer, Morn, shall  
break  
His arrows on the mountain pines,  
And, golden-sandalled, walk the lake!

Farewell! around this smiling bay  
Gay-hearted Health, and Life in bloom,  
With lighter steps than mine, may stray  
In radiant summers yet to come.

But none shall more regretful leave 80  
These waters and these hills than I:  
Or, distant, fonder dream how e'er  
Or dawn is painting wave and sky;

How rising moons shine sad and mild  
On wooded isle and silvering bay;  
Or setting suns beyond the piled  
And purple mountains lead the day;

Nor laughing girl, or bearding boy,  
Nor full-pulsed manhood, lingering  
here,  
Shall add, to life's abounding joy, 90  
The charmed repose to suffering dear.

Still waits kind Nature to impart  
Her choicest gifts to such as gain  
An entrance to her loving heart  
Through the sharp discipline of pain.

Forever from the Hand that takes  
One blessing from us others fall;  
And, soon or late, our Father makes  
His perfect recompense to all!

Oh, watched by Silence and the Night, 100  
And folded in the strong embrace  
Of the great mountains, with the light  
Of the sweet heavens upon thy face,

Lake of the Northland! keep thy dower  
Of beauty still, and while above  
Thy solemn mountains speak of power,  
Be thou the mirror of God's love.

1853.

BURNS<sup>1</sup>ON RECEIVING A SPRIG OF HEATHER IN  
BLOSSOM

No more these simple flowers belong  
To Scottish maid and lover;  
Sown in the common soil of song,  
They bloom the wide world over.

In smiles and tears, in sun and showers,  
The minstrel and the heather,  
The deathless singer and the flowers  
He sang of live together.

Wild heather-bells and Robert Burns!  
The moorland flower and peasant! 10  
How, at their mention, memory turns  
Her pages old and pleasant!

The gray sky wears again its gold  
And purple of adorning,  
And manhood's noonday shadows hold  
The dews of boyhood's morning.

The dews that washed the dust and soil  
From off the wings of pleasure,  
The sky, that flecked the ground of toil  
With golden threads of leisure. 20

I call to mind the summer day,  
The early harvest mowing,  
The sky with sun and clouds at play,  
And flowers with breezes blowing.

<sup>1</sup> When I was fourteen years old my first school-master, Joshua Coffin, the able, eccentric historian of Newbury, brought with him to our house a volume of Burns's poems, from which he read, greatly to my delight. I begged him to leave the book with me, and set myself at once to the task of mastering the glossary of the Scottish dialect at its close. This was about the first poetry I had ever read (with the exception of that of the Bible, of which I had been a close student), and it had a lasting influence upon me. I began to make rhymes myself, and to imagine stories and adventures. (WHITTIER, in his *Autobiographical Letter*; Carpenter's *Whittier*, pp. 298-299.)

One day we had a call from a 'pawky suld carle' of a wandering Scotchman. To him I owe my first introduction to the songs of Burns. After eating his bread and cheese and drinking his mug of cider he gave us 'Bonny Doon,' 'Highland Mary' and 'Auld Lang Syne.' He had a rich, full voice, and entered heartily into the spirit of his lyrics. I have since listened to the same melodies from the lips of Dempster, than whom the Scottish bard has had no sweeter or truer interpreter; but the skilful performance of the artist lacked the novel charm of the gaberlunzie's singing in the old farmhouse kitchen. (WHITTIER, 'Yankee Gypsies,' in his *Prose Works*, vol. 1, pp. 336-337; also quoted in Carpenter's *Whittier*, p. 30.)

I hear the blackbird in the corn,  
The locust in the haying;  
And, like the fabled hunter's horn,  
Old tunes my heart is playing.

How oft that day, with fond delay,  
I sought the maple's shadow,  
And sang with Burns the hours away,  
Forgetful of the meadow !

Bees hummed, birds twittered, overhead  
I heard the squirrels leaping,  
The good dog listened while I read,  
And wagged his tail in keeping.

I watched him while in sportive mood  
I read 'The Twa Dogs' story,  
And half believed he understood  
The poet's allegory.

Sweet day, sweet songs ! The golden  
hours  
Grew brighter for that singing,  
From brook and bird and meadow flowers  
A dearer welcome bringing.

New light on home-seen Nature beamed,  
New glory over Woman;  
And daily life and duty seemed  
No longer poor and common.

I woke to find the simple truth  
Of fact and feeling better  
Than all the dreams that held my youth  
A still repining debtor:

That Nature gives her handmaid, Art,  
The themes of sweet discoursing;  
The tender idyls of the heart  
In every tongue rehearsing.

Why dream of lands of gold and pearl,  
Of loving knight and lady,  
When farmer boy and barefoot girl  
Were wandering there already ?

I saw through all familiar things  
The romance underlying;  
The joys and griefs that plume the wings  
Of Fancy skyward flying.

I saw the same blithe day return,  
The same sweet fall of even,  
That rose on wooded Craigie-burn,  
And sank on crystal Devon.

I matched with Scotland's heathery hills  
The sweetbrier and the clover;  
With Ayr and Doon, my native rills,  
Their wood hymns chanting over.

O'er rank and pomp, as he had seen,  
I saw the Man uprising;  
No longer common or unclean,  
The child of God's baptizing !

With clearer eyes I saw the worth  
Of life among the lowly;  
The Bible at his Cotter's hearth  
Had made my own more holy.

And if at times an evil strain,  
To lawless love appealing,  
Broke in upon the sweet refrain  
Of pure and healthful feeling,

It died upon the eye and ear,  
No inward answer gaining;  
No heart had I to see or hear  
The discord and the staining.

Let those who never erred forget  
His worth, in vain bewailings;  
Sweet Soul of Song ! I own my debt  
Uncancelled by his failings !

Lament who will the ribald line  
Which tells his lapse from duty,  
How kissed the maddening lips of wine  
Or wanton ones of beauty;

But think, while falls that shade be-  
tween  
The erring one and Heaven,  
That he who loved like Magdalen,  
Like her may be forgiven.

Not his the song whose thunderous chime  
Eternal echoes render;  
The mournful Tuscan's haunted rhyme,  
And Milton's starry splendor !

But who his human heart has laid  
To Nature's bosom nearer ?  
Who sweetened toil like him, or paid  
To love a tribute dearer ?

Through all his tuneful art, how strong  
The human feeling gushes !  
The very moonlight of his song  
Is warm with smiles and blushes !

Give lettered pomp to teeth of Time,  
So 'Bonnie Doon' but tarry;  
Blot out the Epic's stately rhyme,  
But spare his 'Highland Mary'!

1854.

1854.

MAUD MULLER<sup>1</sup>

MAUD MULLER on a summer's day  
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

Beneath her torn hat glowed the wealth  
Of simple beauty and rustic health.

Singing, she wrought, and her merry glee  
The mock-bird echoed from his tree.

But when she glanced to the far-off town,  
White from its hill-slope looking down,

The sweet song died, and a vague un-  
rest

And a nameless longing filled her  
breast, — 10

A wish that she hardly dared to own,  
For something better than she had known.

The Judge rode slowly down the lane,  
Smoothing his horse's chestnut mane.

He drew his bridle in the shade  
Of the apple-trees, to greet the maid,

And asked a draught from the spring that  
flowed  
Through the meadow across the road.

She stooped where the cool spring bubbled  
up,  
And filled for him her small tin cup, 20

And blushed as she gave it, looking down  
On her feet so bare, and her tattered  
gown.

<sup>1</sup> The poem had no real foundation in fact, though a hint of it may have been found in recalling an incident, trivial in itself, of a journey on the picturesque Maine seaboard with my sister some years before it was written. We had stopped to rest our tired horse under the shade of an apple-tree, and refresh him with water from a little brook which rippled through the stone wall across the road. A very beautiful young girl in scantest summer attire was at work in the hay-field, and as we talked with her we noticed that she strove to hide her bare feet by raking hay over them, blushing as she did so, through the tan of her cheek and neck. (WHITTIER.)

'Thanks!' said the Judge; 'a sweeter  
draught  
From a fairer hand was never quaffed.'

He spoke of the grass and flowers and  
trees,  
Of the singing birds and the humming  
bees;

Then talked of the haying, and wondered  
whether  
The cloud in the west would bring foul  
weather.

And Maud forgot her brier-torn gown,  
And her graceful ankles bare and brown; 30

And listened, while a pleased surprise  
Looked from her long-lashed hazel eyes.

At last, like one who for delay  
Seeks a vain excuse, he rode away.

Maud Muller looked and sighed: 'Ah me!  
That I the Judge's bride might be!

'He would dress me up in silks so fine,  
And praise and toast me at his wine.

'My father should wear a broadcloth coat;  
My brother should sail a painted boat. 40

'I'd dress my mother so grand and gay,  
And the baby should have a new toy each  
day.

'And I'd feed the hungry and clothe the  
poor,  
And all should bless me who left our door.'

The Judge looked back as he climbed the  
hill,  
And saw Maud Muller standing still.

'A form more fair, a face more sweet,  
Ne'er hath it been my lot to meet.

'And her modest answer and graceful air  
Show her wise and good as she is fair. 50

'Would she were mine, and I to-day,  
Like her, a harvester of hay;

'No doubtful balance of rights and wrongs,  
Nor weary lawyers with endless tongues,

'But low of cattle and song of birds,  
And health and quiet and loving words.'

But he thought of his sisters, proud and  
cold,  
And his mother, vain of her rank and gold.

So, closing his heart, the Judge rode on,  
And Maud was left in the field alone. 60

But the lawyers smiled that afternoon,  
When he hummed in court an old love-  
tune;

And the young girl mused beside the well  
Till the rain on the unraked clover fell.

He wedded a wife of richest dower,  
Who lived for fashion, as he for power.

Yet oft, in his marble hearth's bright glow,  
He watched a picture come and go;

And sweet Maud Muller's hazel eyes  
Looked out in their innocent surprise. 70

Oft, when the wine in his glass was red,  
He longed for the wayside well instead;

And closed his eyes on his garnished rooms  
To dream of meadows and clover-blooms.

And the proud man sighed, with a secret  
pain,  
'Ah, that I were free again !

'Free as when I rode that day,  
Where the barefoot maiden raked her  
hay.'

She wedded a man unlearned and poor, 79  
And many children played round her door.

But care and sorrow, and childbirth pain,  
Left their traces on heart and brain.

And oft, when the summer sun shone hot  
On the new-mown hay in the meadow  
lot,

And she heard the little spring brook fall  
Over the roadside, through the wall,

In the shade of the apple-tree again  
She saw a rider draw his rein;

And, gazing down with timid grace,  
She felt his pleased eyes read her face. 90

Sometimes her narrow kitchen walls  
Stretched away into stately halls;

The weary wheel to a spinnet turned,  
The tallow candle an astral burned,

And for him who sat by the chimney lug,  
Dozing and grumbling o'er pipe and mug,

A manly form at her side she saw,  
And joy was duty and love was law.

Then she took up her burden of life again,  
Saying only, 'It might have been.' 100

Alas for maiden, alas for Judge,  
For rich repiner and household drudge !

God pity them both ! and pity us all,  
Who vainly the dreams of youth recall.

For of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these : 'It might have  
been !'

Ah, well ! for us all some sweet hope  
lies  
Deeply buried from human eyes;

And, in the hereafter, angels may  
Roll the stone from its grave away ! 110  
1854.

## THE RENDITION<sup>1</sup>

I HEARD the train's shrill whistle call,  
I saw an earnest look beseech,  
And rather by that look than speech  
My neighbor told me all.

And, as I thought of Liberty  
Marched handcuffed down that sworded  
street,  
The solid earth beneath my feet  
Reeled fluid as the sea.

<sup>1</sup> On the 2d of June, 1854, Anthony Burns, a fugitive slave from Virginia, after being under arrest for ten days in the Boston Court House, was remanded to slavery under the Fugitive Slave Act, and taken down State Street to a steamer chartered by the United States Government, under guard of United States troops and artillery, Massachusetts militia and Boston police. (WHITTIER.)



I felt a sense of bitter loss, —  
 Shame, tearless grief, and stifling  
     wrath, 10  
 And loathing fear, as if my path  
 A serpent stretched across.

All love of home, all pride of place,  
 All generous confidence and trust,  
 Sank smothering in that deep dis-  
     gust  
 And anguish of disgrace.

Down on my native hills of June,  
 And home's green quiet, hiding all,  
 Fell sudden darkness like the fall  
 Of midnight upon noon ! 20

And Law, an unloosed maniac, strong,  
 Blood-drunken, through the blackness  
     trod,  
 Hoarse-shouting in the ear of God  
 The blasphemy of wrong.

'O Mother, from thy memories proud,  
 Thy old renown, dear Commonwealth,  
 Lend this dead air a breeze of health,  
 And smite with stars this cloud.

'Mother of Freedom, wise and brave,  
 Rise awful in thy strength,' I said; 30  
 Ah me ! I spake but to the dead;  
 I stood upon her grave !

1854.

1854.

ARISEN AT LAST <sup>1</sup>

I SAID I stood upon thy grave,  
 My Mother State, when last the moon  
 Of blossoms clomb the skies of June.

And, scattering ashes on my head,  
 I wore, undreaming of relief,  
 The sackcloth of thy shame and grief.

Again that moon of blossoms shines  
 On leaf and flower and folded wing,  
 And thou hast risen with the spring !

Once more thy strong maternal arms 10  
 Are round about thy children flung, —  
 A lioness that guards her young !

<sup>1</sup> On the passage of the bill to protect the rights and liberties of the people of the State against the Fugitive Slave Act. (WHITTIER.)

No threat is on thy closed lips,  
 But in thine eye a power to smite  
 The mad wolf backward from its light.

Southward the baffled robber's track  
 Henceforth runs only ; hereaway,  
 The fell lycanthrope finds no prey.

Henceforth, within thy sacred gates,  
 His first low howl shall downward draw  
 The thunder of thy righteous law. 21

Not mindless of thy trade and gain,  
 But, acting on the wiser plan,  
 Thou 'rt grown conservative of man.

So shalt thou clothe with life the hope,  
 Dream-painted on the sightless eyes  
 Of him who sang of Paradise, —

The vision of a Christian man,  
 In virtue, as in stature great  
 Embodied in a Christian State. 30

And thou, amidst thy sisterhood  
 Forbearing long, yet standing fast,  
 Shalt win their grateful thanks at last;

When North and South shall strive no  
     more,  
 And all their feuds and fears be lost  
 In Freedom's holy Pentecost.

1855.

1855?

## THE BAREFOOT BOY

BLESSINGS on thee, little man,  
 Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan !  
 With thy turned-up pantaloons,  
 And thy merry whistled tunes;  
 With thy red lip, redder still  
 Kissed by strawberries on the hill;  
 With the sunshine on thy face,  
 Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;  
 From my heart I give thee joy, —  
 I was once a barefoot boy ! 10  
 Prince thou art, — the grown-up man  
 Only is republican.  
 Let the million-dollared ride !  
 Barefoot, trudging at his side,  
 Thou hast more than he can buy  
 In the reach of ear and eye, —  
 Outward sunshine, inward joy:  
 Blessings on thee, barefoot boy !

Oh for boyhood's painless play,  
 Sleep that wakes in laughing day, 20  
 Health that mocks the doctor's rules,  
 Knowledge never learned of schools,  
 Of the wild bee's morning chase,  
 Of the wild-flower's time and place,  
 Flight of fowl and habitude  
 Of the tenants of the wood;  
 How the tortoise bears his shell,  
 How the woodchuck digs his cell,  
 And the ground-mole sinks his well;  
 How the robin feeds her young, 30  
 How the oriole's nest is hung;  
 Where the whitest lilies blow,  
 Where the freshest berries grow,  
 Where the ground-nut trails its vine,  
 Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;  
 Of the black wasp's cunning way,  
 Mason of his walls of clay,  
 And the architectural plans  
 Of gray hornet artisans!  
 For, eschewing books and tasks, 40  
 Nature answers all he asks;  
 Hand in hand with her he walks,  
 Face to face with her he talks,  
 Part and parcel of her joy, —  
 Blessings on the barefoot boy!

Oh for boyhood's time of June,  
 Crowding years in one brief moon,  
 When all things I heard or saw,  
 Me, their master, waited for.  
 I was rich in flowers and trees, 50  
 Humming-birds and honey-bees;  
 For my sport the squirrel played,  
 Plied the snouted mole his spade;  
 For my taste the blackberry cone  
 Purpled over hedge and stone;  
 Laughed the brook for my delight  
 Through the day and through the night,  
 Whispering at the garden wall,  
 Talked with me from fall to fall;  
 Mine the sand-rimmed pickerel pond, 60  
 Mine the walnut slopes beyond,  
 Mine, on bending orchard trees,  
 Apples of Hesperides!  
 Still as my horizon grew,  
 Larger grew my riches too;  
 All the world I saw or knew  
 Seemed a complex Chinese toy,  
 Fashioned for a barefoot boy!

Oh for festal dainties spread,  
 Like my bowl of milk and bread; 70  
 Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,

On the door-stone, gray and rude!  
 O'er me, like a regal tent,  
 Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,  
 Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,  
 Looped in many a wind-swung fold;  
 While for music came the play  
 Of the pied frogs' orchestra;  
 And, to light the noisy choir,  
 Lit the fly his lamp of fire. 80  
 I was monarch: pomp and joy  
 Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,  
 Live and laugh, as boyhood can!  
 Though the flinty slopes be hard,  
 Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,  
 Every morn shall lead thee through  
 Fresh baptisms of the dew;  
 Every evening from thy feet  
 Shall the cool wind kiss the heat: 90  
 All too soon these feet must hide  
 In the prison cells of pride,  
 Lose the freedom of the sod,  
 Like a colt's for work be shod,  
 Made to tread the mills of toil,  
 Up and down in ceaseless moil:  
 Happy if their track be found  
 Never on forbidden ground;  
 Happy if they sink not in  
 Quick and treacherous sands of sin. 100  
 Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,  
 Ere it passes, barefoot boy!

1855?

## THE LAST WALK IN AUTUMN

## I

O'ER the bare woods, whose outstretched  
 hands  
 Plead with the leaden heavens in vain,  
 I see, beyond the valley lands,  
 The sea's long level dim with rain.  
 Around me all things, stark and dumb,  
 Seem praying for the snows to come,  
 And, for the summer bloom and greenness  
 gone,  
 With winter's sunset lights and dazzling  
 morn atone.

## II

Along the river's summer walk,  
 The withered tufts of asters nod; 110  
 And trembles on its arid stalk  
 The hoar plume of the golden-rod.

And on a ground of sombre fir,  
And azure-studded juniper,  
The silver birch its buds of purple shows,  
And scarlet berries tell where bloomed the  
sweet wild-rose !

## III

With mingled sound of horns and bells,  
A far-heard clang, the wild geese fly,  
Storm-sent, from Arctic moors and fells,  
Like a great arrow through the sky, 20  
Two dusky lines converged in one,  
Chasing the southward-flying sun;  
While the brave snow-bird and the hardy  
jay  
Call to them from the pines, as if to bid  
them stay.

## IV

I passed this way a year ago:  
The wind blew south; the noon of day  
Was warm as June's; and save that snow  
Flecked the low mountains far away,  
And that the vernal-seeming breeze  
Mocked faded grass and leafless trees, 30  
I might have dreamed of summer as I lay,  
Watching the fallen leaves with the soft  
wind at play.

## V

Since then, the winter blasts have piled  
The white pagodas of the snow  
On these rough slopes, and, strong and  
wild,  
Yon river, in its overflow  
Of spring-time rain and sun, set free,  
Crashed with its ices to the sea;  
And over these gray fields, then green and  
gold,  
The summer corn has waved, the thunder's  
organ rolled. 40

## VI

Rich gift of God ! A year of time !  
What pomp of rise and shut of day,  
What hues wherewith our Northern  
clime  
Makes autumn's dropping woodlands  
gay,  
What airs outblown from ferny dells,  
And clover-bloom and sweetbrier smells,  
What songs of brooks and birds, what  
fruits and flowers,  
Green woods and moonlit snows, have in  
its round been ours !

VII<sup>1</sup>

I know not how, in other lands,  
The changing seasons come and go; 50  
What splendors fall on Syrian sands,  
What purple lights on Alpine snow !  
Nor how the pomp of sunrise waits  
On Venice at her watery gates;  
A dream alone to me is Arno's vale,  
And the Alhambra's halls are but a travel-  
ler's tale.

## VIII

Yet, on life's current, he who drifts  
Is one with him who rows or sails;  
And he who wanders widest lifts  
No more of beauty's jealous veils 60  
Than he who from his doorway sees  
The miracle of flowers and trees,  
Feels the warm Orient in the noonday air,  
And from cloud minarets hears the sunset  
call to prayer !

## IX

The eye may well be glad that looks  
Where Pharpar's fountains rise and fall;  
But he who sees his native brooks  
Laugh in the sun, has seen them all.  
The marble palaces of Ind  
Rise round him in the snow and wind; 70  
From his lone sweetbrier Persian Hafiz  
smiles,  
And Rome's cathedral awe is in his wood-  
land aisles.

## X

And thus it is my fancy blends  
The near at hand and far and rare;

<sup>1</sup> With this and the following stanzas, compare Em-  
erson's 'Written in Naples,' and the note on it; Lowell's  
'An Invitation'; Holmes's 'After a Lecture on Words-  
worth'; and Whittier's 'To —':

No sweeter bowers the bee delayed,  
In wild Hymettus' scented shade,  
Than those you dwell among;  
Snow-flowered azaleas, intertwined  
With roses, over banks inclined  
With trembling harebells hung !

A charmed life unknown to death,  
Immortal freshness Nature hath;  
Her fabled fount and glen  
Are now and here: Dodona's shrine  
Still murmurs in the wind-swept pine, —  
All is that e'er hath been.

The Beauty which old Greece or Rome  
Sung, painted, wrought, lies close at home;  
We need but eye and ear  
In all our daily walks to trace  
The outlines of incarnate grace,  
The hymns of gods to hear !

See also Whittier's Introduction to the *Poems of J. G. C. Bratnard*, quoted in Carpenter's *Whittier*, pp. 86-87; and further, in Whittier's own poems, 'Our River,' and the Prelude to 'Among the Hills.'

And while the same horizon bends  
 Above the silver-sprinkled hair  
 Which flashed the light of morning skies  
 On childhood's wonder-lifted eyes,  
 Within its round of sea and sky and field,  
 Earth wheels with all her zones, the Kosmos  
 stands revealed. 80

## XI

And thus the sick man on his bed,  
 The toiler to his task-work bound,  
 Behold their prison-walls outspread,  
 Their clipped horizon widen round!  
 While freedom-giving fancy waits,  
 Like Peter's angel at the gates,  
 The power is theirs to baffle care and pain,  
 To bring the lost world back, and make it  
 theirs again!

## XII

What lack of goodly company,  
 When masters of the ancient lyre 90  
 Obey my call, and trace for me  
 Their words of mingled tears and fire!  
 I talk with Bacon, grave and wise,  
 I read the world with Pascal's eyes;  
 And priest and sage, with solemn brows  
 austere,  
 And poets, garland-bound, the Lords of  
 Thought, draw near.

## XIII

Methinks, O friend, I hear thee say,  
 'In vain the human heart we mock;  
 Bring living guests who love the day,  
 Not ghosts who fly at crow of cock! 100  
 The herbs we share with flesh and blood  
 Are better than ambrosial food  
 With laurelled shades.' I grant it, nothing  
 loath,  
 But doubly blest is he who can partake of  
 both.

XIV<sup>1</sup>

He who might Plato's banquet grace,  
 Have I not seen before me sit,  
 And watched his puritanic face,  
 With more than Eastern wisdom lit?  
 Shrewd mystic! who, upon the back  
 Of his Poor Richard's Almanac 110  
 Writing the Sufi's song, the Gentoo's  
 dream,  
 Links Manu's age of thought to Fulton's  
 age of steam!

<sup>1</sup> Stanzas xiv-xvi, Emerson, Bayard Taylor, Sumner.

## XV

Here too, of answering love secure,  
 Have I not welcomed to my hearth  
 The gentle pilgrim troubadour,  
 Whose songs have girdled half the  
 earth;  
 Whose pages, like the magic mat  
 Whereon the Eastern lover sat,  
 Have borne me over Rhine-land's purple  
 vines,  
 And Nubia's tawny sands, and Phrygia's  
 mountain pines! 120

## XVI

And he, who to the lettered wealth  
 Of ages adds the lore unpriced,  
 The wisdom and the moral health,  
 The ethics of the school of Christ;  
 The statesman to his holy trust,  
 As the Athenian archon, just,  
 Struck down, exiled like him for truth  
 alone,  
 Has he not graced my home with beauty all  
 his own?

## XVII

What greetings smile, what farewells  
 wave,  
 What loved ones enter and depart! 130  
 The good, the beautiful, the brave,  
 The Heaven-lent treasures of the  
 heart!  
 How conscious seems the frozen sod  
 And beechen slope whereon they trod!  
 The oak-leaves rustle, and the dry grass  
 bends  
 Beneath the shadowy feet of lost or absent  
 friends.

## XVIII

Then ask not why to these bleak hills  
 I cling, as clings the tufted moss,  
 To bear the winter's lingering chills, 139  
 The mocking spring's perpetual loss.  
 I dream of lands where summer smiles,  
 And soft winds blow from spicy isles,  
 But scarce would Ceylon's breath of flow-  
 ers be sweet,  
 Could I not feel thy soil, New England, at  
 my feet!

## XIX

At times I long for gentler skies,  
 And bathe in dreams of softer air,  
 But homesick tears would fill the eyes

That saw the Cross without the Bear.  
 The pine must whisper to the palm,  
 The north-wind break the tropic  
 calm; 150  
 And with the dreamy languor of the  
 Line,  
 The North's keen virtue blend, and strength  
 to beauty join.

## XX

Better to stem with heart and hand  
 The roaring tide of life, than lie,  
 Unmindful, on its flowery strand,  
 Of God's occasions drifting by!  
 Better with naked nerve to bear  
 The needles of this goading air,  
 Than, in the lap of sensual ease, forego  
 The godlike power to do, the godlike aim  
 to know. 160

## XXI

Home of my heart! to me more fair  
 Than gay Versailles or Windsor's halls,  
 The painted, shingly town-house where  
 The freeman's vote for Freedom falls!  
 The simple roof where prayer is made,  
 Than Gothic groin and colonnade;  
 The living temple of the heart of man,  
 Than Rome's sky-mocking vault, or many-  
 spired Milan!

## XXII

More dear thy equal village schools,  
 Where rich and poor the Bible  
 read, 170  
 Than classic halls where Priestcraft rules,  
 And Learning wears the chains of  
 Creed;  
 Thy glad Thanksgiving, gathering in  
 The scattered sheaves of home and kin,  
 Than the mad license ushering Lenten  
 pains,  
 Or holidays of slaves who laugh and dance  
 in chains.

## XXIII

And sweet homes nestle in these dales,  
 And perch along these wooded swells;  
 And, blest beyond Arcadian vales,  
 They hear the sound of Sabbath bells!  
 Here dwells no perfect man sublime, 181  
 Nor woman winged before her time,  
 But with the faults and follies of the race,  
 Old home-bred virtues hold their not un-  
 honored place.

## XXIV

Here manhood struggles for the sake  
 Of mother, sister, daughter, wife,  
 The graces and the loves which make  
 The music of the march of life;  
 And woman, in her daily round  
 Of duty, walks on holy ground. 190  
 No unpaid menial tills the soil, nor here  
 Is the bad lesson learned at human rights  
 to sneer.

## XXV

Then let the icy north-wind blow  
 The trumpets of the coming storm,  
 To arrowy sleet and blinding snow  
 Yon slanting lines of rain transform.  
 Young hearts shall hail the drifted cold,  
 As gayly as I did of old;  
 And I, who watch them through the frosty  
 pane,  
 Unenvious, live in them my boyhood o'er  
 again. 200

## XXVI

And I will trust that He who heeds  
 The life that hides in mead and wold,  
 Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads,  
 And stains these mosses green and  
 gold,  
 Will still, as He hath done, incline  
 His gracious care to me and mine;  
 Grant what we ask aright, from wrong de-  
 bar,  
 And, as the earth grows dark, make brighter  
 every star!

## XXVII

I have not seen, I may not see,  
 My hopes for man take form in fact,  
 But God will give the victory 211  
 In due time; in that faith I act.  
 And he who sees the future sure,  
 The baffling present may endure,  
 And bless, meanwhile, the unseen Hand  
 that leads  
 The heart's desires beyond the halting step  
 of deeds.

## XXVIII

And thou, my song, I send thee forth,  
 Where harsher songs of mine have  
 flown;  
 Go, find a place at home and hearth  
 Where'er thy singer's name is  
 known; 220

Revive for him the kindly thought  
Of friends; and they who love him not,  
Touched by some strain of thine, perchance  
may take  
The hand he proffers all, and thank him for  
thy sake.

1856.

1857.

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE<sup>1</sup>

Of all the rides since the birth of time,  
Told in story or sung in rhyme, —  
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,  
Or one-eyed Calender's horse of brass,  
Witch astride of a human back,  
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák, —  
The strangest ride that ever was sped  
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!  
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
Tarred and feathered and carried in a  
cart  
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,  
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,  
Feathered and ruffled in every part,  
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.  
Scores of women, old and young,  
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,  
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,  
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:  
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd  
horrt,  
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

<sup>1</sup> The story of Skipper Ireson was told to Whittier by a schoolmate from Marblehead, when he was a student in Haverhill Academy (see Pickard's *Life*, vol. II, p. 409, and the poem 'A Sea Dream'), and he began to write the ballad at that time, in 1828. It was finished, and published in the second number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1857. Lowell, then editor of the *Atlantic*, suggested the use of dialect in the refrain (see Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. I, pp. 417-418, and Lowell's *Letters*, the letter to Whittier of Nov. 4, 1857).

Mr. Samuel Roads, Jr., in his *History of Marblehead*, published in 1879, tried to show that Captain Ireson was not responsible for the abandonment of the disabled ship. Whittier characteristically wrote to Mr. Roads:—

'... I have now no doubt that thy version of Skipper Ireson's ride is the correct one. My verse was founded solely on a fragment of rhyme which I heard from one of my early schoolmates, a native of Marblehead. I supposed the story to which it referred dated back at least a century. I knew nothing of the particulars, and the narrative of the ballad was pure fancy. I am glad for the sake of truth and justice that the real facts are given in thy book. I certainly would not knowingly do injustice to any one, dead or living.

'I am very truly thy friend, JOHN G. WHITTIER.'

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,  
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,  
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase  
Bacchus round some antique vase,  
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,  
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,  
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns'  
twang,  
Over and over the Mænads sang:  
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd  
horrt,  
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

Small pity for him! — He sailed away  
From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay, —  
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,  
With his own town's-people on her deck!  
'Lay by! lay by!' they called to him.  
Back he answered, 'Sink or swim!  
Brag of your catch of fish again!'  
And off he sailed through the fog and  
rain!

Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
Tarred and feathered and carried in a  
cart  
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur  
That wreck shall lie forevermore.  
Mother and sister, wife and maid,  
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead  
Over the moaning and rainy sea, —  
Looked for the coming that might not  
be!  
What did the winds and the sea-birds  
say

Of the cruel captain who sailed away? —  
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
Tarred and feathered and carried in a  
cart  
By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,  
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;  
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,  
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.  
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,  
Hulks of old sailors run aground,  
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,  
And cracked with curses the hoarse re-  
frain:

'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,  
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
By the women o' Morble'ead!'

Sweetly along the Salem road  
 Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.  
 Little the wicked skipper knew  
 Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.  
 Riding there in his sorry trim, 71  
 Like an Indian idol glum and grim,  
 Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear  
 Of voices shouting, far and near :

‘ Here ’s Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,  
 Torr’d an’ futherr’d an’ corr’d in a corrt  
 By the women o’ Morble’ead ! ’

‘ Hear me, neighbors ! ’ at last he cried, —  
 ‘ What to me is this noisy ride ?  
 What is the shame that clothes the skin 80  
 To the nameless horror that lives within ?  
 Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,  
 And hear a cry from a reeling deck !  
 Hate me and curse me, — I only dread  
 The hand of God and the face of the dead ! ’  
 Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a  
 cart  
 By the women of Marblehead !

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea  
 Said, ‘ God has touched him ! why should  
 we ! ’ 90

Said an old wife mourning her only son,  
 ‘ Cut the rogue’s tether and let him run ! ’  
 So with soft relentings and rude excuse,  
 Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,  
 And gave him a cloak to hide him in,  
 And left him alone with his shame and sin.  
 Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
 By the women of Marblehead !

1828, 1857.

1857.

### THE GARRISON OF CAPE ANN

FROM the hills of home forth looking, far  
 beneath the tent-like span  
 Of the sky, I see the white gleam of the  
 headland of Cape Ann.  
 Well I know its coves and beaches to the  
 ebb-tide glimmering down,  
 And the white-walled hamlet children of  
 its ancient fishing-town.

Long has passed the summer morning, and  
 its memory waxes old,  
 When along yon breezy headlands with a  
 pleasant friend I strolled.

Ah ! the autumn sun is shining, and the  
 ocean wind blows cool,  
 And the golden-rod and aster bloom around  
 thy grave, Rantoul !

With the memory of that morning by the  
 summer sea I blend  
 A wild and wondrous story, by the younger  
 Mather penned, 10  
 In that quaint *Magnalia Christi*, with all  
 strange and marvellous things,  
 Heaped up huge and undigested, like the  
 chaos Ovid sings.

Dear to me these far, faint glimpses of the  
 dual life of old,  
 Inward, grand with awe and reverence;  
 outward, mean and coarse and cold;  
 Gleams of mystic beauty playing over dull  
 and vulgar clay,  
 Golden-threaded fancies weaving in a web  
 of hodden gray.

The great eventful Present hides the Past;  
 but through the din  
 Of its loud life hints and echoes from the  
 life behind steal in;  
 And the lore of home and fireside, and the  
 legendary rhyme,  
 Make the task of duty lighter which the  
 true man owes his time. 20

So, with something of the feeling which the  
 Covenanter knew,  
 When with pious chisel wandering Scot-  
 land’s moorland graveyards through,  
 From the graves of old traditions I part  
 the blackberry-vines,  
 Wipe the moss from off the headstones,  
 and retouch the faded lines.

Where the sea-waves back and forward,  
 hoarse with rolling pebbles, ran,  
 The garrison-house stood watching on the  
 gray rocks of Cape Ann;  
 On its windy site uplifting gabled roof and  
 palisade,  
 And rough walls of unhewn timber with  
 the moonlight overlaid.

On his slow round walked the sentry, south  
 and eastward looking forth  
 O’er a rude and broken coast-line, white  
 with breakers stretching north, — 30



Wood and rock and gleaming sand-drift,  
jagged capes, with bush and tree,  
Leaning inland from the smiting of the  
wild and gusty sea.

Before the deep-mouthed chimney, dimly  
lit by dying brands,  
Twenty soldiers sat and waited, with their  
muskets in their hands;  
On the rough-hewn oaken table the venison  
haunch was shared,  
And the pewter tankard circled slowly  
round from beard to beard.

Long they sat and talked together, —  
talked of wizards Satan-sold;  
Of all ghostly sights and noises, — signs  
and wonders manifold;  
Of the spectre-ship of Salem, with the dead  
men in her shrouds,  
Sailing sheer above the water, in the loom  
of morning clouds; 40

Of the marvellous valley hidden in the  
depths of Gloucester woods,  
Full of plants that love the summer, —  
blooms of warmer latitudes;  
Where the Arctic birch is braided by the  
tropic's flowery vines,  
And the white magnolia-blossoms star the  
twilight of the pines!

But their voices sank yet lower, sank to  
husky tones of fear,  
As they spake of present tokens of the  
powers of evil near; —  
Of a spectral host, defying stroke of steel  
and aim of gun;  
Never yet was ball to slay them in the  
mould of mortals run!

Thrice, with plumes and flowing scalp-locks,  
from the midnight wood they  
came, —  
Thrice around the block-house marching,  
met, unharmed, its volleyed flame; 50  
Then, with mocking laugh and gesture,  
sunk in earth or lost in air,  
All the ghostly wonder vanished, and the  
moonlit sands lay bare.

Midnight came; from out the forest moved  
a dusky mass that soon  
Grew to warriors, plumed and painted,  
grimly marching in the moon.

'Ghosts or witches,' said the captain, 'thou  
I foil the Evil One!'  
And he rammed a silver button, from his  
doublet, down his gun.

Once again the spectral horror moved the  
guarded wall about;  
Once again the levelled muskets through  
the palisades flashed out,  
With that deadly aim the squirrel on his  
tree-top might not shun,  
Nor the beach-bird seaward flying with his  
slant wing to the sun. 60

Like the idle rain of summer sped the harm-  
less shower of lead.  
With a laugh of fierce derision, once again  
the phantoms fled;  
Once again, without a shadow on the sands  
the moonlight lay,  
And the white smoke curling through it  
drifted slowly down the bay!

'God preserve us!' said the captain; 'never  
mortal foes were there;  
They have vanished with their leader,  
Prince and Power of the air!  
Lay aside your useless weapons; skill and  
prowess naught avail;  
They who do the Devil's service wear their  
master's coat of mail!'

So the night grew near to cock-crow, when  
again a warning call  
Roused the score of weary soldiers watch-  
ing round the dusky hall: 70  
And they looked to flint and priming,  
and they longed for break of  
day;  
But the captain closed his Bible: 'Let us  
cease from man, and pray!'

To the men who went before us, all the  
unseen powers seemed near,  
And their steadfast strength of courage  
struck its roots in holy fear.  
Every hand forsook the musket, every head  
was bowed and bare,  
Every stout knee pressed the flag-stones,  
as the captain led in prayer.

Ceased thereat the mystic marching of the  
spectres round the wall,  
But a sound abhorred, unearthly, smote the  
ears and hearts of all, —

**Howls** of rage and shrieks of anguish !  
 Never after mortal man  
**Saw** the ghostly leaguers marching round  
 the block-house of Cape Ann. 80

**So** to us who walk in summer through the  
 cool and sea-blown town,  
**From** the childhood of its people comes the  
 solemn legend down.  
**Not** in vain the ancient fiction, in whose  
 moral lives the youth  
**And** the fitness and the freshness of an  
 undecaying truth.

**Soon** or late to all our dwellings come the  
 spectres of the mind,  
**Doubts** and fears and dread forebodings,  
 in the darkness undefined;  
**Round** us throng the grim projections of  
 the heart and of the brain,  
**And** our pride of strength is weakness, and  
 the cunning hand is vain.

**In** the dark we cry like children; and no  
 answer from on high  
**Breaks** the crystal spheres of silence, and  
 no white wings downward fly; 90  
**But** the heavenly help we pray for comes  
 to faith, and not to sight,  
**And** our prayers themselves drive backward  
 all the spirits of the night !

1857.

### THE PIPES AT LUCKNOW<sup>1</sup>

**PIPES** of the misty moorlands,  
 Voice of the glens and hills;  
**The** droning of the torrents,  
 The treble of the rills !  
**Not** the braes of bloom and heather,  
 Nor the mountains dark with rain,  
**Nor** maiden bower, nor border tower,  
 Have heard your sweetest strain !

**Dear** to the Lowland reaper,  
 And plaided mountaineer, — 10  
**To** the cottage and the castle  
 The Scottish pipes are dear; —  
**Sweet** sounds the ancient pibroch  
 O'er mountain, loch, and glade;  
**But** the sweetest of all music  
 The pipes at Lucknow played.

<sup>1</sup> An incident of the Siege of Lucknow, during the mutiny of the native troops in India, 1857. See Tennyson's superb ballad, 'The Relief of Lucknow.'

Day by day the Indian tiger  
 Louder yelled, and nearer crept;  
 Round and round the jungle-serpent  
 Near and nearer circles swept. 20  
 'Pray for rescue, wives and mothers, —  
 Pray to-day !' the soldier said;  
 'To-morrow, death's between us  
 And the wrong and shame we dread.'

Oh, they listened, looked, and waited,  
 Till their hope became despair;  
 And the sobs of low bewailing  
 Filled the pauses of their prayer.  
 Then up spake a Scottish maiden,  
 With her ear unto the ground: 30  
 'Dinna ye hear it ? — dinna ye hear it ?  
 The pipes o' Havelock sound !'

Hushed the wounded man his groaning;  
 Hushed the wife her little ones;  
 Alone they heard the drum-roll  
 And the roar of Sepoy guns.  
 But to sounds of home and childhood  
 The Highland ear was true; —  
 As her mother's cradle-crooning  
 The mountain pipes she knew. 40

Like the march of soundless music  
 Through the vision of the seer,  
 More of feeling than of hearing,  
 Of the heart than of the ear,  
 She knew the droning pibroch,  
 She knew the Campbell's call:  
 'Hark ! hear ye no MacGregor's,  
 The grandest o' them all !'

Oh, they listened, dumb and breath-  
 less,  
 And they caught the sound at last; 50  
 Faint and far beyond the Goomtee  
 Rose and fell the piper's blast !  
 Then a burst of wild thanksgiving  
 Mingled woman's voice and man's;  
 'God be praised ! — the march of Have-  
 lock !  
 The piping of the clans !'

Louder, nearer, fierce as vengeance,  
 Sharp and shrill as swords at strife,  
 Came the wild MacGregor's clan-call,  
 Stinging all the air to life. 60  
 But when the far-off dust-cloud  
 To plaided legions grew,  
 Full tenderly and blithesomely  
 The pipes of rescue blew !

Round the silver domes of Lucknow,  
 Moslem mosque and Pagan shrine,  
 Breathed the air to Britons dearest,  
 The air of Auld Lang Syne.<sup>1</sup>  
 O'er the cruel roll of war-drums  
 Rose that sweet and homelike strain;  
 And the tartan clove the turban,  
 As the Goomtee cleaves the plain. 71

Dear to the corn-land reaper  
 And plaided mountaineer, —  
 To the cottage and the castle  
 The piper's song is dear.  
 Sweet sounds the Gaelic pibroch  
 O'er mountain, glen, and glade;  
 But the sweetest of all music 80  
 The Pipes at Lucknow played !

1857-1858.

1858.

TELLING THE BEES<sup>2</sup>

HERE is the place; right over the hill  
 Runs the path I took;  
 You can see the gap in the old wall still,  
 And the stepping-stones in the shallow  
 brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-  
 barred,  
 And the poplars tall;

<sup>1</sup> It is in strict accordance with the facts of the rescue. In the distance the beleaguered garrison heard the stern and vengeful slogan of the MacGregors, but when the troops of Havelock came in view of the English flag still floating from the Residency, the pipers struck up the immortal air of Burns, 'Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot.' (WHITTIER, in a letter to Lowell, April 10, 1858.)

<sup>2</sup> A remarkable custom, brought from the Old Country, formerly prevailed in the rural districts of New England. On the death of a member of the family, the bees were at once informed of the event, and their hives dressed in mourning. This ceremonial was supposed to be necessary to prevent the swarms from leaving their hives and seeking a new home. (WHITTIER.)

The place Whittier had in mind in writing 'Telling the Bees' was his birthplace. There were bee-hives on the garden terrace near the well-sweep, occupied perhaps by the descendants of Thomas Whittier's bees. The approach to the house from over the northern shoulder of Job's Hill by a path that was in constant use in his boyhood and is still in existence, is accurately described in the poem. The 'gap in the old wall' is still to be seen, and 'the stepping-stones in the shallow brook' are still in use. His sister's garden was down by the brook-side in front of the house, and her daffodils are perpetuated and may now be found in their season each year in that place. The red-barred gate, the poplars, the cattle yard with 'the white horns tossing above the wall,' these were all part of Whittier's boy life on the old farm. (Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. II, pp. 414-415.)

See also Pickard's *Whittier-Land*, pp. 17-18.

And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-  
 yard,  
 And the white horns tossing above the  
 wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;  
 And down by the brink 75  
 Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-  
 o'errun,  
 Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes,  
 Heavy and slow;  
 And the same rose blows, and the same sun  
 glows,  
 And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There 's the same sweet clover-smell in the  
 breeze;  
 And the June sun warm  
 Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,  
 Setting, as then, over Fernside farm. 80

I mind me how with a lover's care  
 From my Sunday coat  
 I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my  
 hair,  
 And cooled at the brookside my brow  
 and throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed, —  
 To love, a year;  
 Down through the beeches I looked at  
 last  
 On the little red gate and the well-sweep  
 near.

I can see it all now, — the slantwise rain  
 Of light through the leaves, 85  
 The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,  
 The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before, —  
 The house and the trees,  
 The barn's brown gable, the vine by the  
 door, —  
 Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,  
 Forward and back,  
 Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,  
 Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun 91  
 Had the chill of snow;

**For** I knew she was telling the bees of one  
Gone on the journey we all must go !

**Then** I said to myself, ' My Mary weeps  
For the dead to-day:  
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps  
The fret and the pain of his age away.'

**But** her dog whined low; on the doorway  
sill,  
With his cane to his chin, 50  
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still  
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

**And** the song she was singing ever since  
In my ear sounds on: —  
' Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence !  
Mistress Mary is dead and gone !'

1858.

## THE CABLE HYMN

**O** LONELY bay of Trinity,  
O dreary shores, give ear !  
Lean down unto the white-lipped sea  
The voice of God to hear !

From world to world his couriers fly,  
Thought-winged and shod with fire;  
The angel of his stormy sky  
Rides down the sunken wire.

What saith the herald of the Lord ?  
' The world's long strife is done; 10  
Close wedded by that mystic cord,  
Its continents are one.

' And one in heart, as one in blood,  
Shall all her peoples be;  
The hands of human brotherhood  
Are clasped beneath the sea.

' Through Orient seas, o'er Afric's plain  
And Asian mountains borne,  
The vigor of the Northern brain  
Shall nerve the world outworn. 20

' From clime to clime, from shore to shore,  
Shall thrill the magic thread;  
The new Prometheus steals once more  
The fire that wakes the dead.'

Throb on, strong pulse of thunder! beat  
From answering beach to beach;

Fuse nations in thy kindly heat,  
And melt the chains of each !

Wild terror of the sky above,  
Glide tamed and dumb below ! 30  
Bear gently, Ocean's carrier-dove,  
Thy errands to and fro.

Weave on, swift shuttle of the Lord,  
Beneath the deep so far,  
The bridal robe of earth's accord,  
The funeral shroud of war !

For lo ! the fall of Ocean's wall  
Space mocked and time outrun;  
And round the world the thought of all  
Is as the thought of one ! 40

The poles unite, the zones agree,  
The tongues of striving cease;  
As on the Sea of Galilee  
The Christ is whispering, Peace !  
1858. 1858.

## MY PSALM

I MOURN no more my vanished years:  
Beneath a tender rain,  
An April rain of smiles and tears,  
My heart is young again.

The west-winds blow, and, singing low,  
I hear the glad streams run;  
The windows of my soul I throw  
Wide open to the sun.

No longer forward nor behind  
I look in hope or fear; 10  
But, grateful, take the good I find,  
The best of now and here.

I plough no more a desert land,  
To harvest weed and tare;  
The manna dropping from God's hand  
Rebukes my painful care.

I break my pilgrim staff, I lay  
Aside the toiling oar;  
The angel sought so far away  
I welcome at my door. 20

The airs of spring may never play  
Among the ripening corn,  
Nor freshness of the flowers of May  
Blow through the autumn morn;

Yet shall the blue-eyed gentian look  
Through fringed lids to heaven,  
And the pale aster in the brook  
Shall see its image given;—

The woods shall wear their robes of praise,  
The south-wind softly sigh, 30  
And sweet, calm days in golden haze  
Melt down the amber sky.

Not less shall manly deed and word  
Rebuke an age of wrong;  
The graven flowers that wreath the sword  
Make not the blade less strong.

But smiting hands shall learn to heal,—  
To build as to destroy;  
Nor less my heart for others feel  
That I the more enjoy. 40

All as God wills, who wisely heeds  
To give or to withhold,  
And knoweth more of all my needs  
Than all my prayers have told!

Enough that blessings undeserved  
Have marked my erring track;  
That whereso'er my feet have swerved,  
His chastening turned me back;

That more and more a Providence  
Of love is understood, 50  
Making the springs of time and sense  
Sweet with eternal good;—

That death seems but a covered way  
Which opens into light,  
Wherein no blinded child can stray  
Beyond the Father's sight;

That care and trial seem at last,  
Through Memory's sunset air,  
Like mountain-ranges overpast,  
In purple distance fair; 60

That all the jarring notes of life  
Seem blending in a psalm,  
And all the angles of its strife  
Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,  
And so the west-winds play;  
And all the windows of my heart  
I open to the day.

1859.

## BROWN OF OSSAWATOMIE

JOHN BROWN of Ossawatimie spake on his  
dying day:

'I will not have to shrive my soul a priest  
in Slavery's pay.

But let some poor slave-mother whom I  
have striven to free,  
With her children, from the gallows-stair  
put up a prayer for me!'

John Brown of Ossawatimie, they led him  
out to die;

And lo! a poor slave-mother with her little  
child pressed nigh.

Then the bold, blue eye grew tender, and  
the old harsh face grew mild,  
As he stooped between the jeering ranks  
and kissed the negro's child!

The shadows of his stormy life that moment  
fell apart;

And they who blamed the bloody hand for-  
gave the loving heart.

That kiss from all its guilty means re-  
deemed the good intent,

And round the grisly fighter's hair the mar-  
tyr's aureole bent!

Perish with him the folly that seeks through  
evil good!

Long live the generous purpose unstained  
with human blood!

Not the raid of midnight terror, but the  
thought which underlies;

Not the borderer's pride of daring, but the  
Christian's sacrifice.

Nevermore may yon Blue Ridges the North-  
ern rifle hear,

Nor see the light of blazing homes flash on  
the negro's spear.

But let the free-winged angel Truth their  
guarded passes scale,

To teach that right is more than might, and  
justice more than mail!

So vainly shall Virginia set her battle in  
array;

In vain her trampling squadrons knead the  
winter snow with clay.

She may strike the pouncing eagle, but she  
dares not harm the dove;

And every gate she bars to Hate shall open  
wide to Love!

1859.

MY PLAYMATE <sup>1</sup>

**T**HE pines were dark on Ramoth hill,  
 Their song was soft and low;  
**T**he blossoms in the sweet May wind  
 Were falling like the snow.

**T**he blossoms drifted at our feet,  
 The orchard birds sang clear;  
**T**he sweetest and the saddest day  
 It seemed of all the year.

**F**or, more to me than birds or flowers,  
 My playmate left her home, 10  
**A**nd took with her the laughing spring,  
 The music and the bloom.

**S**he kissed the lips of kith and kin,  
 She laid her hand in mine:  
**W**hat more could ask the bashful boy  
 Who fed her father's kine?

**S**he left us in the bloom of May:  
 The constant years told o'er  
**T**heir seasons with as sweet May morns,  
 But she came back no more. 20

**I** walk, with noiseless feet, the round  
 Of uneventful years;  
**S**till o'er and o'er I sow the spring  
 And reap the autumn ears.

**S**he lives where all the golden year  
 Her summer roses blow;  
**T**he dusky children of the sun  
 Before her come and go.

**T**here haply with her jewelled hands  
 She smooths her silken gown, — 30  
**N**o more the homespun lap wherein  
 I shook the walnuts down.

**T**he wild grapes wait us by the brook,  
 The brown nuts on the hill,  
**A**nd still the May-day flowers make  
 sweet  
 The woods of Follymill.

**T**he lilies blossom in the pond,  
 The bird builds in the tree,

<sup>1</sup> Compare the poem 'Memories,' and see Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. i, p. 276, vol. ii, pp. 426-428, and *Whittier-Land*, pp. 66-67.

Tennyson said of this poem and of Whittier, 'It is a perfect poem; in some of his descriptions of scenery and wild-flowers, he would rank with Wordsworth.'

**T**he dark pines sing on Ramoth hill  
 The slow song of the sea. 40

**I** wonder if she thinks of them,  
 And how the old time seems, —  
**I**f ever the pines of Ramoth wood  
 Are sounding in her dreams.

**I** see her face, I hear her voice;  
 Does she remember mine?  
**A**nd what to her is now the boy  
 Who fed her father's kine?

**W**hat cares she that the orioles build  
 For other eyes than ours, — 50  
**T**hat other hands with nuts are filled,  
 And other laps with flowers?

**O** playmate in the golden time!  
 Our mossy seat is green,  
**I**ts fringing violets blossom yet,  
 The old trees o'er it lean.

**T**he winds so sweet with birch and fern  
 A sweeter memory blow;  
**A**nd there in spring the veeries sing  
 The song of long ago. 60

**A**nd still the pines of Ramoth wood  
 Are moaning like the sea, —  
**T**he moaning of the sea of change  
 Between myself and thee!

1859-1860.

1860.

TO WILLIAM H. SEWARD <sup>2</sup>

**S**TATESMAN, I thank thee! and, if yet dis-  
 sent

**M**ingles, reluctant, with my large content,  
**I** cannot censure what was nobly meant.  
**B**ut, while constrained to hold even Union  
 less

**T**han Liberty and Truth and Righteousness,  
**I** thank thee in the sweet and holy name  
**O**f peace, for wise calm words that put to  
 shame

**P**assion and party. Courage may be shown  
**N**ot in defiance of the wrong alone;  
**H**e may be bravest who, unweaponed, bears

<sup>2</sup> On the 12th of January, 1861, Mr. Seward delivered in the Senate chamber a speech on 'The State of the Union,' in which he urged the paramount duty of preserving the Union, and went as far as it was possible to go, without surrender of principles, in concessions to the Southern party. (WHITTIER.)

The olive branch, and, strong in justice,  
 spares  
 The rash wrong-doer, giving widest scope  
 To Christian charity and generous hope.  
 If, without damage to the sacred cause  
 Of Freedom and the safeguard of its laws —  
 If, without yielding that for which alone  
 We prize the Union, thou canst save it now  
 From a baptism of blood, upon thy brow  
 A wreath whose flowers no earthly soil  
 have known,  
 Woven of the beatitudes, shall rest,  
 And the peacemaker be forever blest !  
 1861. 1861.

### OUR RIVER

FOR A SUMMER FESTIVAL AT 'THE  
 LAURELS' ON THE MERRIMAC

ONCE more on yonder laurelled height  
 The summer flowers have budded;  
 Once more with summer's golden light  
 The vales of home are flooded;  
 And once more, by the grace of Him  
 Of every good the Giver,  
 We sing upon its wooded rim  
 The praises of our river:

Its pines above, its waves below,  
 The west-wind down it blowing, 10  
 As fair as when the young Brissot  
 Beheld it seaward flowing, —  
 And bore its memory o'er the deep,  
 To soothe the martyr's sadness,  
 And fresco, in his troubled sleep,  
 His prison-walls with gladness.

We know the world is rich with streams  
 Renowned in song and story,  
 Whose music murmurs through our dreams  
 Of human love and glory: 20  
 We know that Arno's banks are fair,  
 And Rhine has castled shadows,  
 And, poet-tuned, the Doon and Ayr  
 Go singing down their meadows.

But while, unpictured and unsung  
 By painter or by poet,  
 Our river waits the tuneful tongue  
 And cunning hand to show it, —  
 We only know the fond skies lean  
 Above it, warm with blessing, 30  
 And the sweet soul of our Undine  
 Awakes to our caressing.

No fickle sun-god holds the flocks  
 That graze its shores in keeping;  
 No icy kiss of Dian mocks  
 The youth beside it sleeping :  
 Our Christian river loveth most  
 The beautiful and human;  
 The heathen streams of Naiads boast,  
 But ours of man and woman. 4

The miner in his cabin hears  
 The ripple we are hearing;  
 It whispers soft to homesick ears  
 Around the settler's clearing:  
 In Sacramento's vales of corn,  
 Or Santee's bloom of cotton,  
 Our river by its valley-born  
 Was never yet forgotten.

The drum rolls loud, the bugle fills  
 The summer air with clangor; 5  
 The war-storm shakes the solid hills  
 Beneath its tread of anger;  
 Young eyes that last year smiled in ours  
 Now point the rifle's barrel,  
 And hands then stained with fruit and  
 flowers  
 Bear redder stains of quarrel.

But blue skies smile, and flowers bloom  
 on,  
 And rivers still keep flowing,  
 The dear God still his rain and sun  
 On good and ill bestowing. 60  
 His pine-trees whisper, 'Trust and wait !'  
 His flowers are prophesying  
 That all we dread of change or fate  
 His love is underlying.

And thou, O Mountain-born ! — no more  
 We ask the wise Allotter  
 Than for the firmness of thy shore,  
 The calmness of thy water,  
 The cheerful lights that overlay  
 Thy rugged slopes with beauty, 70  
 To match our spirits to our day  
 And make a joy of duty.

1861.

1861.

### AMY WENTWORTH

HER fingers shame the ivory keys  
 They dance so light along;  
 The bloom upon her parted lips  
 Is sweeter than the song.



O perfumed suitor, spare thy smiles !  
 Her thoughts are not of thee;  
 She better loves the salted wind,  
 The voices of the sea.

Her heart is like an outbound ship  
 That at its anchor swings;  
 The murmur of the stranded shell  
 Is in the song she sings. 10

She sings, and, smiling, hears her praise,  
 But dreams the while of one  
 Who watches from his sea-blown deck  
 The icebergs in the sun.

She questions all the winds that blow,  
 And every fog-wreath dim,  
 And bids the sea-birds flying north  
 Bear messages to him. 20

She speeds them with the thanks of  
 men  
 He perilled life to save,  
 And grateful prayers like holy oil  
 To smooth for him the wave.

Brown Viking of the fishing-smack  
 Fair toast of all the town ! —  
 The skipper's jerkin ill beseems  
 The lady's silken gown !

But ne'er shall Amy Wentworth wear  
 For him the blush of shame  
 Who dares to set his manly gifts  
 Against her ancient name. 30

The stream is brightest at its spring,  
 And blood is not like wine;  
 Nor honored less than he who heirs  
 Is he who founds a line.

Full lightly shall the prize be won,  
 If love be Fortune's spur;  
 And never maiden stoops to him  
 Who lifts himself to her. 40

Her home is brave in Jaffrey Street,  
 With stately stairways worn  
 By feet of old Colonial knights  
 And ladies gentle-born.

Still green about its ample porch  
 The English ivy twines,  
 Trained back to show in English oak  
 The herald's carven signs.

And on her, from the wainscot old,  
 Ancestral faces frown, — 50  
 And this has worn the soldier's sword,  
 And that the judge's gown.

But, strong of will and proud as they,  
 She walks the gallery floor  
 As if she trod her sailor's deck  
 By stormy Labrador !

The sweetbrier blooms on Kittery-side,  
 And green are Elliot's bowers;  
 Her garden is the pebbled beach,  
 The mosses are her flowers. 60

She looks across the harbor-bar  
 To see the white gulls fly;  
 His greeting from the Northern sea  
 Is in their clanging cry.

She hums a song, and dreams that he,  
 As in its romance old,  
 Shall homeward ride with silken sails  
 And masts of beaten gold !

Oh, rank is good, and gold is fair,  
 And high and low mate ill; 70  
 But love has never known a law  
 Beyond its own sweet will !

1862.

## THE WAITING

I WAIT and watch: before my eyes  
 Methinks the night grows thin and gray;  
 I wait and watch the eastern skies  
 To see the golden spears arise  
 Beneath the oriflamme of day !

Like one whose limbs are bound in  
 trance  
 I hear the day-sounds swell and grow,  
 And see across the twilight glance,  
 Troop after troop, in swift advance,  
 The shining ones with plumes of snow ! 10

I know the errand of their feet,  
 I know what mighty work is theirs;  
 I can but lift up hands unmeet  
 The threshing-floors of God to beat,  
 And speed them with unworthy prayers.

I will not dream in vain despair  
 The steps of progress wait for me:

The puny leverage of a hair  
The planet's impulse well may spare,  
A drop of dew the tided sea. 20

The loss, if loss there be, is mine,  
And yet not mine if understood;  
For one shall grasp and one resign,  
One drink life's rue, and one its wine,  
And God shall make the balance good.

Oh power to do! Oh baffled will!  
Oh prayer and action! ye are one.  
Who may not strive, may yet fulfil  
The harder task of standing still, 29  
And good but wished with God is done!  
1862.<sup>1</sup>

### THE WATCHERS

BESIDE a stricken field I stood;  
On the torn turf, on grass and wood,  
Hung heavily the dew of blood.

Still in their fresh mounds lay the slain,  
But all the air was quick with pain  
And gusty sighs and tearful rain.

Two angels, each with drooping head  
And folded wings and noiseless tread,  
Watched by that valley of the dead.

The one, with forehead saintly bland 10  
And lips of blessing, not command,  
Leaned, weeping, on her olive wand.

The other's brows were scarred and knit,  
His restless eyes were watch-fires lit,  
His hands for battle-gauntlets fit.

'How long!' — I knew the voice of  
Peace, —  
'Is there no respite? no release?  
When shall the hopeless quarrel cease?

'O Lord, how long! One human soul  
Is more than any parchment scroll, 20  
Or any flag thy winds unroll.

'What price was Ellsworth's, young and  
brave?  
How weigh the gift that Lyon gave,  
Or count the cost of Winthrop's grave?

<sup>1</sup> The physical limitations which made it impossible for Whittier to take an active part in public affairs were especially hard for him to bear during these years. Compare Milton's Sonnet 'On his Blindness.'

'O brother! if thine eye can see,  
Tell how and when the end shall be,  
What hope remains for thee and me.'

Then Freedom sternly said: 'I shun  
No strife nor pang beneath the sun,  
When human rights are staked and won. 3

'I knelt with Ziska's hunted flock,  
I watched in Toussaint's cell of rock,  
I walked with Sidney to the block.

'The moor of Marston felt my tread,  
Through Jersey snows the march I led,  
My voice Magenta's charges sped.

'But now, through weary day and night,  
I watch a vague and aimless fight  
For leave to strike one blow aright.

'On either side my foe they own: 40  
One guards through love his ghastly throne,  
And one through fear to reverence grown.

'Why wait we longer, mocked, betrayed,  
By open foes, or those afraid  
To speed thy coming through my aid?

'Why watch to see who win or fall?  
I shake the dust against them all,  
I leave them to their senseless brawl.'

'Nay,' Peace implored: 'yet longer wait;  
The doom is near, the stake is great: 50  
God knoweth if it be too late.

'Still wait and watch; the way prepare  
Where I with folded wings of prayer  
May follow, weaponless and bare.'

'Too late!' the stern, sad voice replied,  
'Too late!' its mournful echo sighed.  
In low lament the answer died.

A rustling as of wings in flight,  
An upward gleam of lessening white,  
So passed the vision, sound and sight. 60

But round me, like a silver bell  
Rung down the listening sky to tell  
Of holy help, a sweet voice fell.

'Still hope and trust,' it sang; 'the rod  
Must fall, the wine-press must be trod,  
But all is possible with God!' 1862.

ANDREW RYKMAN'S PRAYER<sup>1</sup>

ANDREW RYKMAN's dead and gone;  
 You can see his leaning slate  
 In the graveyard, and thereon  
 Read his name and date.

'*Trust is truer than our fears,*  
 Runs the legend through the moss,  
 '*Gain is not in added years,*  
*Nor in death is loss.*'

Still the feet that thither trod,  
 All the friendly eyes are dim; 10  
 Only Nature, now, and God  
 Have a care for him.

There the dews of quiet fall,  
 Singing birds and soft winds stray:  
 Shall the tender Heart of all  
 Be less kind than they?

What he was and what he is  
 They who ask may haply find,  
 If they read this prayer of his  
 Which he left behind. 20

Pardon, Lord, the lips that dare  
 Shape in words a mortal's prayer!  
 Prayer, that, when my day is done,  
 And I see its setting sun,  
 Shorn and beamless, cold and dim,  
 Sink beneath the horizon's rim, —  
 When this ball of rock and clay  
 Crumbles from my feet away,  
 And the solid shores of sense  
 Melt into the vague immense, 30  
 Father! I may come to Thee  
 Even with the beggar's plea,  
 As the poorest of thy poor,  
 With my needs, and nothing more.

Not as one who seeks his home  
 With a step assured I come;  
 Still behind the tread I hear  
 Of my life-companion, Fear;  
 Still a shadow deep and vast  
 From my westering feet is cast, 40

<sup>1</sup> In June, 1862, Whittier wrote to Fields, then editor of the *Atlantic*: 'I have by me a poem upon which I have bestowed much thought, and which I think is in some respects the best thing I have ever written. I will bring it or send it soon.' This poem was 'Andrew Rykman's Prayer.'

Wavering, doubtful, undefined,  
 Never shapen nor outlined:  
 From myself the fear has grown,  
 And the shadow is my own.  
 Yet, O Lord, through all a sense  
 Of thy tender providence  
 Stays my failing heart on Thee,  
 And confirms the feeble knee;  
 And, at times, my worn feet press  
 Spaces of cool quietness, 50  
 Lilled whiteness shone upon  
 Not by light of moon or sun.  
 Hours there be of inmost calm,  
 Broken but by grateful psalm,  
 When I love Thee more than fear Thee,  
 And thy blessed Christ seems near me,  
 With forgiving look, as when  
 He beheld the Magdalen.  
 Well I know that all things move  
 To the spherical rhythm of love, — 60  
 That to Thee, O Lord of all!  
 Nothing can of chance befall:  
 Child and seraph, mote and star,  
 Well Thou knowest what we are!  
 Through thy vast creative plan  
 Looking, from the worm to man,  
 There is pity in thine eyes,  
 But no hatred nor surprise.  
 Not in blind caprice of will,  
 Not in cunning sleight of skill, 70  
 Not for show of power, was wrought  
 Nature's marvel in thy thought.  
 Never careless hand and vain  
 Smites these chords of joy and pain;  
 No immortal selfishness  
 Plays the game of curse and bless:  
 Heaven and earth are witnesses  
 That thy glory goodness is.  
 Not for sport of mind and force  
 Hast Thou made thy universe, 80  
 But as atmosphere and zone  
 Of thy loving heart alone.  
 Man, who walketh in a show,  
 Sees before him, to and fro,  
 Shadow and illusion go;  
 All things flow and fluctuate,  
 Now contract and now dilate.  
 In the welter of this sea,  
 Nothing stable is but Thee;  
 In this whirl of swooning trance, 90  
 Thou alone art permanence;  
 All without Thee only seems,  
 All beside is choice of dreams.  
 Never yet in darkest mood  
 Doubted I that Thou wast good,

Nor mistook my will for fate,  
 Pain of sin for heavenly hate, —  
 Never dreamed the gates of pearl  
 Rise from out the burning marl,  
 Or that good can only live 100  
 Of the bad conservative,  
 And through counterpoise of hell  
 Heaven alone be possible.

For myself alone I doubt;  
 All is well, I know, without;  
 I alone the beauty mar,  
 I alone the music jar.  
 Yet, with hands by evil stained,  
 And an ear by discord pained,  
 I am groping for the keys 110  
 Of the heavenly harmonies;  
 Still within my heart I bear  
 Love for all things good and fair.  
 Hands of want or souls in pain  
 Have not sought my door in vain;  
 I have kept my fealty good  
 To the human brotherhood;  
 Scarcely have I asked in prayer  
 That which others might not share.  
 I, who hear with secret shame 120  
 Praise that paineth more than blame,  
 Rich alone in favors lent,  
 Virtuous by accident,  
 Doubtful where I fain would rest,  
 Frailest where I seem the best,  
 Only strong for lack of test, —  
 What am I, that I should press  
 Special pleas of selfishness,  
 Coolly mounting into heaven  
 On my neighbor unforgiven? 130  
 Ne'er to me, howe'er disguised,  
 Comes a saint unrecognized;  
 Never fails my heart to greet  
 Noble deed with warmer beat;  
 Halt and maimed, I own not less  
 All the grace of holiness;  
 Nor, through shame or self-distrust,  
 Less I love the pure and just.  
 Lord, forgive these words of mine:  
 What have I that is not Thine? 140  
 Whatsoe'er I fain would boast  
 Needs thy pitying pardon most.  
 Thou, O Elder Brother! who  
 In thy flesh our trial knew,  
 Thou, who hast been touched by these  
 Our most sad infirmities,  
 Thou alone the gulf canst span  
 In the dual heart of man,  
 And between the soul and sense

Reconcile all difference, 150  
 Change the dream of me and mine  
 For the truth of Thee and thine,  
 And, through chaos, doubt, and strife,  
 Interfuse thy calm of life.  
 Haply, thus by Thee renewed,  
 In thy borrowed goodness good,  
 Some sweet morning yet in God's  
 Dim, æonian periods,  
 Joyful I shall wake to see  
 Those I love who rest in Thee 160  
 And to them in Thee allied,  
 Shall my soul be satisfied.

Scarcely Hope hath shaped for me  
 What the future life may be.  
 Other lips may well be bold;  
 Like the publican of old,  
 I can only urge the plea,  
 'Lord, be merciful to me!'  
 Nothing of desert I claim,  
 Unto me belongeth shame. 170  
 Not for me the crowns of gold,  
 Palms, and harpings manifold;  
 Not for erring eye and feet  
 Jasper wall and golden street.  
 What Thou wilt, O Father, give!  
 All is gain that I receive.  
 If my voice I may not raise  
 In the elders' song of praise,  
 If I may not, sin-defiled,  
 Claim my birthright as a child, 180  
 Suffer it that I to Thee  
 As an hired servant be;  
 Let the lowliest task be mine,  
 Grateful, so the work be thine;  
 Let me find the humblest place  
 In the shadow of thy grace:  
 Blest to me were any spot  
 Where temptation whispers not.  
 If there be some weaker one,  
 Give me strength to help him on; 190  
 If a blinder soul there be,  
 Let me guide him nearer Thee.  
 Make my mortal dreams come true  
 With the work I fain would do;  
 Clothe with life the weak intent,  
 Let me be the thing I meant;  
 Let me find in thy employ  
 Peace that dearer is than joy;  
 Out of self to love be led  
 And to heaven acclimated, 200  
 Until all things sweet and good  
 Seem my natural habitude.

So we read the prayer of him  
Who, with John of Labadie,  
Trode, of old, the oozy rim  
Of the Zuyder Zee.

Thus did Andrew Rykman pray.  
Are we wiser, better grown,  
That we may not, in our day,  
Make his prayer our own?

1862.

210  
1863.BARBARA FRIETCHIE<sup>1</sup>

UP from the meadows rich with corn,  
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand  
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,  
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord  
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall  
When Lee marched over the mountain-  
wall; 10

Over the mountains winding down,  
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,  
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun  
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,  
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,  
She took up the flag the men hauled down; 20

In her attic window the staff she set,  
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,  
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right  
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.

<sup>1</sup> On the authenticity of the story see Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. II, pp. 454-459.

'Halt!'—the dust-brown ranks stood  
fast.

'Fire!'—out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;  
It rent the banner with seam and gash. 30

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff  
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,  
And shook it forth with a royal will.

'Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,  
But spare your country's flag,' she  
said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,  
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred  
To life at that woman's deed and  
word; 40

'Who touches a hair of yon gray head  
Dies like a dog! March on!' he said.

All day long through Frederick street  
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tost  
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell  
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light  
Shone over it with a warm good-night. 50

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,  
And the Rebel rides on his raids no  
more.

Honor to her! and let a tear  
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,  
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw  
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down  
On thy stars below in Frederick town! 60  
1863. 1863.

THE WRECK OF RIVERMOUTH<sup>1</sup>

RIVERMOUTH Rocks are fair to see,  
By dawn or sunset shone across,  
When the ebb of the sea has left them  
free

To dry their fringes of gold-green moss:  
For there the river comes winding down,  
From salt sea-meadows and uplands brown,  
And waves on the outer rocks afoam  
Shout to its waters, 'Welcome home!'

And fair are the sunny isles in view  
East of the grisly Head of the Boar, 10  
And Agamenticus lifts its blue  
Disk of a cloud the woodlands o'er;  
And southerly, when the tide is down,  
'Twixt white sea-waves and sand-hills  
brown,  
The beach-birds dance and the gray gulls  
wheel  
Over a floor of burnished steel.

Once, in the old Colonial days,  
Two hundred years ago and more,  
A boat sailed down through the winding  
ways  
Of Hampton River to that low shore, 20  
Full of a goodly company  
Sailing out on the summer sea,  
Veering to catch the land-breeze light,  
With the Boar to left and the Rocks to  
right.

In Hampton meadows, where mowers laid  
Their scythes to the swaths of salted  
grass,  
'Ah, well-a-day! our hay must be made!'  
A young man sighed, who saw them pass.  
Loud laughed his fellows to see him stand  
Whetting his scythe with a listless hand, 30  
Hearing a voice in a far-off song,  
Watching a white hand beckoning long.

<sup>1</sup> The Goody Cole who figures in this poem and 'The Changeling' was Eunice Cole, who for a quarter of a century or more was feared, persecuted, and hated as the witch of Hampton. She lived alone in a hovel a little distant from the spot where the Hampton Academy now stands, and there she died, unattended. When her death was discovered, she was hastily covered up in the earth near by, and a stake driven through her body, to exorcise the evil spirit. Rev. Stephen Bachiler or Batchelder was one of the ablest of the early New England preachers. His marriage late in life to a woman regarded by his church as disreputable induced him to return to England, where he enjoyed the esteem and favor of Oliver Cromwell during the Protectorate. (WHITTIER.)

See also Pickard's *Whittier-Land*, pp. 88-89.

'Fie on the witch!' cried a merry girl,  
As they rounded the point where Goody  
Cole

Sat by her door with her wheel atwirl,  
A bent and blear-eyed poor old soul.  
'Oho!' she muttered, 'ye're brave to-  
day!

But I hear the little waves laugh and say,  
"The broth will be cold that waits at  
home;

For it's one to go, but another to come!'"

'She's cursed,' said the skipper; 'speak  
her fair: 45

I'm scary always to see her shake  
Her wicked head, with its wild gray hair,  
And nose like a hawk, and eyes like a  
snake.'

But merrily still, with laugh and shout,  
From Hampton River the boat sailed out,  
Till the huts and the flakes on Star seemed  
nigh,

And they lost the scent of the pines of Rye.

They dropped their lines in the lazy tide,  
Drawing up haddock and mottled cod; 50  
They saw not the shadow that walked be-  
side,

They heard not the feet with silence shod.  
But thicker and thicker a hot mist grew,  
Shot by the lightnings through and through;  
And muffled growls, like the growl of a  
beast,

Ran along the sky from west to east.

Then the skipper looked from the darken-  
ing sea

Up to the dimmed and wading sun;  
But he spake like a brave man cheerily,  
'Yet there is time for our homeward  
run.' 60

Veering and tacking, they backward wore;  
And just as a breath from the woods ashore  
Blew out to whisper of danger past,  
The wrath of the storm came down at last!

The skipper hauled at the heavy sail:

'God be our help!' he only cried,  
As the roaring gale, like the stroke of a  
flail,

Smote the boat on the starboard side.  
The Shoalsmen looked, but saw alone  
Dark films of rain-cloud slantwise blown, 70  
Wild rocks lit up by the lightning's glare,  
The strife and torment of sea and air.

Goody Cole looked out from her door:  
 The Isles of Shoals were drowned and  
 gone,  
 Scarcely she saw the Head of the Boar  
 Toss the foam from tusks of stone.  
 She clasped her hands with a grip of pain,  
 The tear on her cheek was not of rain:  
 'They are lost,' she muttered, 'boat and  
 crew!  
 Lord, forgive me! my words were true!' 80

Suddenly seaward swept the squall;  
 The low sun smote through cloudy rack;  
 The Shoals stood clear in the light, and all  
 The trend of the coast lay hard and black.  
 But far and wide as eye could reach,  
 No life was seen upon wave or beach;  
 The boat that went out at morning never  
 Sailed back again into Hampton River.

O mower, lean on thy bended snath,  
 Look from the meadows green and low: 90  
 The wind of the sea is a waft of death,  
 The waves are singing a song of woe!  
 By silent river, by moaning sea,  
 Long and vain shall thy watching be:  
 Never again shall the sweet voice call,  
 Never the white hand rise and fall!

O Rivermouth Rocks, how sad a sight  
 Ye saw in the light of breaking day!  
 Dead faces looking up cold and white  
 From sand and seaweed where they lay.  
 The mad old witch-wife wailed and wept, 101  
 And cursed the tide as it backward crept:  
 'Crawl back, crawl back, blue water-snake!  
 Leave your dead for the hearts that break!'

Solemn it was in that old day  
 In Hampton town and its log-built church,  
 Where side by side the coffins lay  
 And the mourners stood in aisle and  
 porch.  
 In the singing-seats young eyes were dim,  
 The voices faltered that raised the hymn, 110  
 And Father Dalton, grave and stern,  
 Sobbed through his prayer and wept in turn.

But his ancient colleague did not pray;  
 Under the weight of his fourscore years  
 He stood apart with the iron-gray  
 Of his strong brows knitted to hide his  
 tears;  
 And a fair-faced woman of doubtful fame,  
 Linking her own with his honored name,

Subtle as sin, at his side withstood  
 The felt reproach of her neighborhood. 120

Apart with them, like them forbid,  
 Old Goody Cole looked drearily round,  
 As, two by two, with their faces hid,  
 The mourners walked to the burying-  
 ground.  
 She let the staff from her clasped hands  
 fall:  
 'Lord, forgive us! we're sinners all!'  
 And the voice of the old man answered  
 her:  
 'Amen!' said Father Bachiler.

So, as I sat upon Appledore  
 In the calm of a closing summer day, 130  
 And the broken lines of Hampton shore  
 In purple mist of cloudland lay,  
 The Rivermouth Rocks their story told;  
 And waves aglow with sunset gold,  
 Rising and breaking in steady chime,  
 Beat the rhythm and kept the time.

And the sunset paled, and warmed once  
 more  
 With a softer, tenderer after-glow;  
 In the east was moon-rise, with boats off-  
 shore

And sails in the distance drifting slow. 140  
 The beacon glimmered from Portsmouth  
 bar,  
 The White Isle kindled its great red star;  
 And life and death in my old-time lay  
 Mingled in peace like the night and day!  
 1864.

## THE VANISHERS<sup>1</sup>

SWEETEST of all childlike dreams  
 In the simple Indian lore  
 Still to me the legend seems  
 Of the shapes who flit before.

Flitting, passing,\*seen and gone,  
 Never reached nor found at rest,  
 Baffling search, but beckoning on  
 To the Sunset of the Blest.

<sup>1</sup> Whittier wrote to Fields, September 27, 1864: 'I take the liberty of inclosing a little poem of mine which has beguiled some weary hours. I hope thee will like it. How strange it seems not to read it to my sister! If thee have read Schoolcraft thee will remember what he says of the Puck-wud-jinnies, or "Little Vanishers." The legend is very beautiful, and I hope I have done it justice in some sort.'



From the clefts of mountain rocks,  
Through the dark of lowland firs, 10  
Flash the eyes and flow the locks  
Of the mystic Vanishers !

And the fisher in his skiff,  
And the hunter on the moss,  
Hear their call from cape and cliff,  
See their hands the birch-leaves toss.

Wistful, longing, through the green  
Twilight of the clustered pines,  
In their faces rarely seen  
Beauty more than mortal shines. 20

Fringed with gold their mantles flow  
On the slopes of westering knolls;  
In the wind they whisper low  
Of the Sunset Land of Souls.

Doubt who may, O friend of mine !  
Thou and I have seen them too;  
On before with beck and sign  
Still they glide, and we pursue.

More than clouds of purple trail  
In the gold of setting day; 30  
More than gleams of wing or sail  
Beckon from the sea-mist gray.

Glimpses of immortal youth,  
Gleams and glories seen and flown,  
Far-heard voices sweet with truth,  
Airs from viewless Eden blown;

Beauty that eludes our grasp,  
Sweetness that transcends our taste,  
Loving hands we may not clasp,  
Shining feet that mock our haste; 40

Gentle eyes we closed below,  
Tender voices heard once more,  
Smile and call us, as they go  
On and onward, still before.

Guided thus, O friend of mine !  
Let us walk our little way,  
Knowing by each beckoning sign  
That we are not quite astray.

Chase we still, with baffled feet,  
Smiling eye and waving hand, 50  
Sought and seeker soon shall meet,  
Lost and found, in Sunset Land !

1864.

1864.

BRYANT ON HIS BIRTHDAY<sup>1</sup>

We praise not now the poet's art,  
The rounded beauty of his song;  
Who weighs him from his life apart  
Must do his nobler nature wrong.

Not for the eye, familiar grown  
With charms to common sight denied,—  
The marvellous gift he shares alone  
With him who walked on Rydal-side;

Not for rapt hymn nor woodland lay,  
Too grave for smiles, too sweet for tears;  
We speak his praise who wears to-day  
The glory of his seventy years.

When Peace brings Freedom in her train,  
Let happy lips his songs rehearse;  
His life is now his noblest strain,  
His manhood better than his verse !

Thank God ! his hand on Nature's keys  
Its cunning keeps at life's full span;  
But, dimmed and dwarfed, in times like  
these,  
The poet seems beside the man !

So be it ! let the garlands die,  
The singer's wreath, the painter's meed,  
Let our names perish, if thereby  
Our country may be saved and freed !

1864.

1865.

LAUS DEO !<sup>2</sup>

It is done !  
Clang of bell and roar of gun  
Send the tidings up and down.  
How the belfries rock and reel !  
How the great guns, peal on peal,  
Fling the joy from town to town !

<sup>1</sup> Written for the celebration of Bryant's seventieth birthday at the Century Club in New York.

<sup>2</sup> On hearing the bells ring on the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. The resolution was adopted by Congress, January 31, 1865. The ratification by the requisite number of States was announced December 18, 1865. (Whittier.)

The suggestion came to the poet as he sat in the Friends' Meeting-house in Amesbury, where he was present at the regular Fifth-day meeting. All sat in silence, but on his return to his home, he recited a portion of the poem, not yet committed to paper, to his housemates in the garden room. 'It wrote itself, or rather sang itself, while the bells rang,' he wrote to Lucy Larcom. (*Cambridge Edition of Whittier*.) See also Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. ii, pp. 488-489.

Ring, O bells !  
 Every stroke exulting tells  
 Of the burial hour of crime.  
 Loud and long, that all may hear, 10  
 Ring for every listening ear  
 Of Eternity and Time !

Let us kneel:  
 God's own voice is in that peal,  
 And this spot is holy ground.  
 Lord, forgive us ! What are we,  
 That our eyes this glory see,  
 That our ears have heard the sound !

For the Lord  
 On the whirlwind is abroad; 20  
 In the earthquake He has spoken;  
 He has smitten with his thunder  
 The iron walls asunder,  
 And the gates of brass are broken !

Loud and long  
 Lift the old exulting song;  
 Sing with Miriam by the sea,  
 He has cast the mighty down;  
 Horse and rider sink and drown;  
 ' He hath triumphed gloriously ! ' 30

Did we dare,  
 In our agony of prayer,  
 Ask for more than He has done ?  
 When was ever his right hand  
 Over any time or land  
 Stretched as now beneath the sun ?

How they pale,  
 Ancient myth and song and tale,  
 In this wonder of our days,  
 When the cruel rod of war 40  
 Blossoms white with righteous law,  
 And the wrath of man is praise !

Blotted out !  
 All within and all about  
 Shall a fresher life begin;  
 Freer breathe the universe  
 As it rolls its heavy curse  
 On the dead and buried sin !

It is done !  
 In the circuit of the sun 50  
 Shall the sound thereof go forth.  
 It shall bid the sad rejoice,  
 It shall give the dumb a voice,  
 It shall belt with joy the earth !

Ring and swing,  
 Bells of joy ! On morning's wing  
 Send the song of praise abroad !  
 With a sound of broken chains  
 Tell the nations that He reigns,  
 Who alone is Lord and God ! 60  
 1865. 1865.

## HYMN

FOR THE CELEBRATION OF EMANCIPA-  
 TION AT NEWBURYPORT

NOT unto us who did but seek  
 The word that burned within to speak,  
 Not unto us this day belong  
 The triumph and exultant song.

Upon us fell in early youth  
 The burden of unwelcome truth,  
 And left us, weak and frail and few,  
 The censor's painful work to do.

Thenceforth our life a fight became,  
 The air we breathed was hot with blame; 10  
 For not with gauged and softened tone  
 We made the bondman's cause our own.

We bore, as Freedom's hope forlorn,  
 The private hate, the public scorn;  
 Yet held through all the paths we trod  
 Our faith in man and trust in God.

We prayed and hoped; but still, with awe,  
 The coming of the sword we saw;  
 We heard the nearing steps of doom,  
 We saw the shade of things to come. 20

In grief which they alone can feel  
 Who from a mother's wrong appeal,  
 With blended lines of fear and hope  
 We cast our country's horoscope.

For still within her house of life  
 We marked the lurid sign of strife,  
 And, poisoning and imbittering all,  
 We saw the star of Wormwood fall.

Deep as our love for her became  
 Our hate of all that wrought her shame, 30  
 And if, thereby, with tongue and pen  
 We erred, — we were but mortal men.

We hoped for peace; our eyes survey  
 The blood-red dawn of Freedom's day:

We prayed for love to loose the chain;  
 'Tis shorn by battle's axe in twain!

Nor skill nor strength nor zeal of ours  
 Has mined and heaved the hostile towers;  
 Not by our hands is turned the key  
 That sets the sighing captives free. 40

A redder sea than Egypt's wave  
 Is piled and parted for the slave;  
 A darker cloud moves on in light;  
 A fiercer fire is guide by night!

The praise, O Lord! is thine alone,  
 In thy own way thy work is done!  
 Our poor gifts at thy feet we cast,  
 To whom be glory, first and last!  
 1865. 1865.

### THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

O FRIENDS! with whom my feet have trod  
 The quiet aisles of prayer,  
 Glad witness to your zeal for God  
 And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;  
 Your logic linked and strong  
 I weigh as one who dreads dissent,  
 And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak  
 To hold your iron creeds: 10  
 Against the words ye bid me speak  
 My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?  
 Who talks of scheme and plan?  
 The Lord is God! He needeth not  
 The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground  
 Ye tread with boldness shod;  
 I dare not fix with mete and bound  
 The love and power of God. 20

Ye praise his justice; even such  
 His pitying love I deem:  
 Ye seek a king; I fain would touch  
 The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods  
 A world of pain and loss;  
 I hear our Lord's beatitudes  
 And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, with-  
 in  
 Myself, alas! I know: 30  
 Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,  
 Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,  
 I veil mine eyes for shame,  
 And urge, in trembling self-distrust,  
 A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,  
 I feel the guilt within;  
 I hear, with groan and travail-cries,  
 The world confess its sin. 40

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,  
 And tossed by storm and flood,  
 To one fixed trust my spirit clings;  
 I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim  
 And seraphs may not see,  
 But nothing can be good in Him  
 Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below  
 I dare not throne above, 50  
 I know not of his hate, — I know  
 His goodness and his love.

I dimly guess from blessings known  
 Of greater out of sight,  
 And, with the chastened Psalmist, own  
 His judgments too are right.

I long for household voices gone,  
 For vanished smiles I long,  
 But God hath led my dear ones on,  
 And He can do no wrong. 60

I know not what the future hath  
 Of marvel or surprise,  
 Assured alone that life and death  
 His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak  
 To bear an untried pain,  
 The bruised reed He will not break,  
 But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,  
 Nor works my faith to prove; 70  
 I can but give the gifts He gave,  
 And plead his love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea  
I wait the muffled oar;  
No harm from Him can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where his islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond his love and care.

80

O brothers ! if my faith is vain,  
If hopes like these betray,  
Pray for me that my feet may gain  
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord ! by whom are seen  
Thy creatures as they be,  
Forgive me if too close I lean  
My human heart on Thee !

1865 ?

SNOW-BOUND<sup>1</sup>

## A WINTER IDYL

TO THE MEMORY OF THE HOUSEHOLD IT DESCRIBES

THIS POEM IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR

As the Spirits of Darkness be stronger in the dark,  
so Good Spirits, which be Angels of Light, are augmented not only by the Divine light of the Sun, but also by our common Wood Fire: and as the Celestial Fire drives away dark spirits, so also this our Fire of Wood doth the same. — COR. AGRIPPA, *Occult Philosophy*, Book I. ch. v.

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,  
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.  
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

EMERSON. *The Snow Storm*.

THE sun that brief December day  
Rose cheerless over hills of gray,  
And, darkly circled, gave at noon  
A sadder light than waning moon.

<sup>1</sup> The inmates of the family at the Whittier homestead who are referred to in the poem were my father, mother, my brother and two sisters, and my uncle and aunt, both unmarried. In addition, there was the district school-master, who boarded with us. The 'not unfear'd, half-welcome guest' was Harriet Livermore, daughter of Judge Livermore, of New Hampshire, a young woman of fine natural ability, enthusiastic, eccentric, with alight control over her violent temper, which sometimes made her religious profession doubtful. She was equally ready to exhort in school-house prayer-meetings and dance in a Washington ball-room, while her father was a member of Congress. She early embraced the doctrine of the Second Advent, and felt it her duty to proclaim the Lord's speedy coming. With this message she crossed the Atlantic and spent the greater part of a long life in travelling over Europe and Asia. She lived some time with Lady Hester Stanhope, a woman as fantastic and mentally strained as herself, on the slope of Mt. Lebanon, but finally quarrelled with her in regard to two white horses with red marks on their backs which suggested the idea of saddles, on which her titled hostess expected to ride into

Slow tracing down the thickening sky  
Its mute and ominous prophecy,  
A portent seeming less than threat,  
It sank from sight before it set.

Jerusalem with the Lord. A friend of mine found her, when quite an old woman, wandering in Syria with a tribe of Arabs, who with the Oriental notion that madness is inspiration, accepted her as their prophetess and leader. At the time referred to in 'Snow-Bound' she was boarding at the Rocks Village, about two miles from us.

In my boyhood, in our lonely farm-house, we had scanty sources of information; few books and only a small weekly newspaper. Our only annual was the Almanac. Under such circumstances story-telling was a necessary resource in the long winter evenings. My father when a young man had traversed the wilderness to Canada, and could tell us of his adventures with Indians and wild beasts, and of his sojourn in the French villages. My uncle was ready with his record of hunting and fishing and, it must be confessed, with stories, which he at least half believed, of witchcraft and apparitions. My mother, who was born in the Indian-haunted region of Somersworth, New Hampshire, between Dover and Portsmouth, told us of the inroads of the savages, and the narrow escape of her ancestors. She described strange people who lived on the Piscataqua and Cochecho, among whom was Bantam the sorcerer. I have in my possession the wizard's 'conjuring book,' which he solemnly opened when consulted. It is a copy of Cornelius Agrippa's *Magia*, printed in 1651, dedicated to Dr. Robert Child, who, like Michael Scott, had learned

the art of glamourie  
In Padua beyond the sea,

and who is famous in the annals of Massachusetts, where he was at one time a resident, as the first man who dared petition the General Court for liberty of conscience. The full title of the book is *Three Books of Occult Philosophy, by Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Knight, Doctor of both Laws, Counsellor to Caesar's Sacred Majesty and Judge of Prerogative Court.* (WHITTIER.)

See also Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. i, pp. 27-36, and vol. ii, pp. 494-500; and *Whittier-Land*, pp. 12, 24, 39, 74.

A chill no coat, however stout,  
 Of homespun stuff could quite shut out, 10  
 A hard, dull bitterness of cold,  
 That checked, mid-vein, the circling race  
 Of life-blood in the sharpened face,  
 The coming of the snow-storm told.  
 The wind blew east; we heard the roar  
 Of Ocean on his wintry shore,  
 And felt the strong pulse throbbing there  
 Beat with low rhythm our inland air.

Meanwhile we did our nightly chores, —  
 Brought in the wood from out of doors, 20  
 Littered the stalls, and from the mows  
 Raked down the herd's-grass for the cows:  
 Heard the horse whinnying for his corn;  
 And, sharply clashing horn on horn,  
 Impatient down the stanchion rows  
 The cattle shake their walnut bows;  
 While, peering from his early perch  
 Upon the scaffold's pole of birch,  
 The cock his crested helmet bent  
 And down his querulous challenge sent. 30

Unwarmed by any sunset light  
 The gray day darkened into night,  
 A night made hoary with the swarm  
 And whirl-dance of the blinding storm,  
 As zigzag, wavering to and fro,  
 Crossed and recrossed the winged snow:  
 And ere the early bedtime came  
 The white drift piled the window-frame,  
 And through the glass the clothes-line posts  
 Looked in like tall and sheeted ghosts. 40

So all night long the storm roared on:  
 The morning broke without a sun;  
 In tiny spherule traced with lines  
 Of Nature's geometric signs,  
 In starry flake, and pellicle,  
 All day the hoary meteor fell;  
 And, when the second morning shone,  
 We looked upon a world unknown,  
 On nothing we could call our own.  
 Around the glistening wonder bent 50  
 The blue walls of the firmament,  
 No cloud above, no earth below, —  
 A universe of sky and snow!  
 The old familiar sights of ours  
 Took marvellous shapes; strange domes  
 and towers  
 Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,  
 Or garden-wall, or belt of wood;  
 A smooth white mound the brush-pile  
 showed,

A fenceless drift what once was road;  
 The bridle-post an old man sat 60  
 With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat;  
 The well-curb had a Chinese roof;  
 And even the long sweep, high aloof,  
 In its slant splendor, seemed to tell  
 Of Pisa's leaning miracle.

A prompt, decisive man, no breath  
 Our father wasted: 'Boys, a path!' 70  
 Well pleased (for when did farmer boy  
 Count such a summons less than joy?)  
 Our buskins on our feet we drew;  
 With mittened hands, and caps drawn low,  
 To guard our necks and ears from snow,  
 We cut the solid whiteness through.  
 And, where the drift was deepest, made  
 A tunnel walled and overlaid  
 With dazzling crystal: we had read  
 Of rare Aladdin's wondrous cave,  
 And to our own his name we gave,  
 With many a wish the luck were ours  
 To test his lamp's supernal powers. 80  
 We reached the barn with merry din,  
 And roused the prisoned brutes within.  
 The old horse thrust his long head out,  
 And grave with wonder gazed about;  
 The cock his lusty greeting said,  
 And forth his speckled harem led;  
 The oxen lashed their tails, and hooked,  
 And mild reproach of hunger looked;  
 The horned patriarch of the sheep,  
 Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep, 90  
 Shook his sage head with gesture mute,  
 And emphasized with stamp of foot.

All day the gusty north-wind bore  
 The loosening drift its breath before;  
 Low circling round its southern zone,  
 The sun through dazzling snow-mist shone.  
 No church-bell lent its Christian tone  
 To the savage air, no social smoke  
 Curled over woods of snow-hung oak.  
 A solitude made more intense 100  
 By dreary-voiced elements,  
 The shrieking of the mindless wind,  
 The moaning tree-boughs swaying blind,  
 And on the glass the unmeaning beat  
 Of ghostly finger-tips of sleet.  
 Beyond the circle of our hearth  
 No welcome sound of toil or mirth  
 Unbound the spell, and testified  
 Of human life and thought outside.  
 We minded that the sharpest ear 110  
 The buried brooklet could not hear,

The music of whose liquid lip  
Had been to us companionship,  
And, in our lonely life, had grown  
To have an almost human tone.

As night drew on, and, from the crest  
Of wooded knolls that ridged the west,  
The sun, a snow-blown traveller, sank  
From sight beneath the smothering bank,  
We piled, with care, our nightly stack 120  
Of wood against the chimney-back, —  
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,  
And on its top the stout back-stick;  
The knotty forestick laid apart,  
And filled between with curious art  
The ragged brush; then, hovering near,  
We watched the first red blaze appear,  
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam  
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,  
Until the old, rude-furnished room 130  
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;  
While radiant with a mimic flame  
Outside the sparkling drift became,  
And through the bare-boughed lilac-tree  
Our own warm hearth seemed blazing free.  
The crane and pendent trammels showed,  
The Turks' heads on the andirons glowed;  
While childish fancy, prompt to tell  
The meaning of the miracle,  
Whispered the old rhyme: '*Under the tree,  
When fire outdoors burns merrily,* 141  
*There the witches are making tea.*'

The moon above the eastern wood  
Shone at its full; the hill-range stood  
Transfigured in the silver flood,  
Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,  
Dead white, save where some sharp ravine  
Took shadow, or the sombre green  
Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black  
Against the whiteness at their back. 150  
For such a world and such a night  
Most fitting that unwarming light,  
Which only seemed where'er it fell  
To make the coldness visible.

Shut in from all the world without,  
We sat the clean-winged hearth about,  
Content to let the north-wind roar  
In baffled rage at pane and door,  
While the red logs before us beat  
The frost-line back with tropic heat; 160  
And ever, when a louder blast  
Shook beam and rafter as it passed,  
The merrier up its roaring draught

The great throat of the chimney laughed;  
The house-dog on his paws outspread  
Laid to the fire his drowsy head,  
The cat's dark silhouette on the wall  
A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;  
And, for the winter fireside meet,  
Between the andirons' straddling feet, 170  
The mug of cider simmered slow,  
The apples sputtered in a row,  
And, close at hand, the basket stood  
With nuts from brown October's wood.

What matter how the night behaved?  
What matter how the north-wind raved?  
Blow high, blow low, not all its snow  
Could quench our hearth-fire's ruddy glow.  
O Time and Change! — with hair as gray  
As was my sire's that winter day, 180  
How strange it seems, with so much gone  
Of life and love, to still live on!  
Ah, brother! only I and thou<sup>1</sup>  
Are left of all that circle now, —  
The dear home faces whereupon  
That fitful firelight paled and shone.  
Henceforward, listen as we will,  
The voices of that hearth are still;  
Look where we may, the wide earth o'er  
Those lighted faces smile no more. 190  
We tread the paths their feet have worn,  
We sit beneath their orchard trees,  
We hear, like them, the hum of bees  
And rustle of the bladed corn;  
We turn the pages that they read,  
Their written words we linger o'er,  
But in the sun they cast no shade,  
No voice is heard, no sign is made,  
No step is on the conscious floor!  
Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust 200  
(Since He who knows our need is just)  
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.  
Alas for him who never sees  
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!  
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,  
Nor looks to see the breaking day  
Across the mournful marbles play!  
• Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,  
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,  
That Life is ever lord of Death, 210  
And Love can never lose its own!

We sped the time with stories old,  
Wrought puzzles out, and riddles told,

<sup>1</sup> Whittier's only brother, Matthew, was born in 1812 and died in 1883. See Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. i, pp. 31-32.



Or stammered from our school-book lore  
 'The Chief of Gambia's golden shore.'<sup>1</sup>  
 How often since, when all the land  
 Was clay in Slavery's shaping hand,  
 As if a far-blown trumpet stirred  
 The languorous sin-sick air, I heard:  
 'Does not the voice of reason cry,  
     Claim the first right which Nature gave,  
 From the red scourge of bondage fly,  
     Nor deign to live a burdened slave!'  
 Our father rode again his ride  
 On Memphremagog's wooded side;  
 Sat down again to moose and samp  
 In trapper's hut and Indian camp;  
 Lived o'er the old idyllic ease  
 Beneath St. François' hemlock-trees;  
 Again for him the moonlight shone  
 On Norman cap and bodiced zone;  
 Again he heard the violin play  
 Which led the village dance away.  
 And mingled in its merry whirl  
 The grandam and the laughing girl.  
 Or, nearer home, our steps he led  
 Where Salisbury's level marshes spread  
     Mile-wide as flies the laden bee;  
 Where merry mowers, hale and strong,  
 Swept, scythe on scythe, their swaths  
     along  
     The low green prairies of the sea.  
 We shared the fishing off Boar's Head,  
 And round the rocky Isles of Shoals  
 The hake-broil on the drift-wood coals;  
 The chowder on the sand-beach made,  
 Dipped by the hungry, steaming hot.  
 With spoons of clam-shell from the pot.  
 We heard the tales of witchcraft old,  
 And dream and sign and marvel told  
 To sleepy listeners as they lay  
 Stretched idly on the salted hay,  
 Adrift along the winding shores,  
 When favoring breezes deigned to blow  
 The square sail of the gundelow  
 And idle lay the useless oars.

Our mother, while she turned her wheel  
 Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,  
 Told how the Indian hordes came down  
 At midnight on Cocheco town,  
 And how her own great-uncle bore  
 His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.

<sup>1</sup> 'The African Chief' was the title of a poem by Mrs. Sarah Wentworth Morton, wife of the Hon. Perez Morton, a former attorney-general of Massachusetts. Mrs. Morton's *nom de plume* was *Philenia*. The school-book in which 'The African Chief' was printed was Caleb Bingham's *The American Preceptor*. (WHITTIER.)

Recalling, in her fitting phrase,  
 So rich and picturesque and free  
 (The common unrhymed poetry  
 Of simple life and country ways),  
 The story of her early days,—  
 She made us welcome to her home;  
 Old hearths grew wide to give us room;  
 We stole with her a frightened look  
 At the gray wizard's conjuring-book,  
 The fame whereof went far and wide  
 Through all the simple country-side;  
 We heard the hawks at twilight play,  
 The boat-horn on Piscataqua,  
 The loon's weird laughter far away;  
 We fished her little trout-brook, knew  
 What flowers in wood and meadow grew,  
 What sunny hillsides autumn-brown.  
 She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,  
 Saw where in sheltered cove and bay  
 The ducks' black squadron anchored lay,  
 And heard the wild-geese calling loud  
 Beneath the gray November cloud.

Then, haply, with a look more grave,  
 And soberer tone, some tale she gave  
 From painful Sewel's ancient tome,<sup>2</sup>  
 Beloved in every Quaker home,  
 Of faith fire-winged by martyrdom,  
 Or Chalkley's Journal, old and quaint,<sup>3</sup>—  
 Gentlest of skippers, rare sea-saint!—  
 Who, when the dreary calms prevailed,  
 And water-butt and bread-cask failed,

<sup>2</sup> 'Painful Sewel's ancient tome' . . . is the *History of the Christian People called Quakers*, by William Sewel, a Dutchman . . . He died about 1725. . . . It was originally written in Low Dutch, and translated into English by Sewel himself. . . . It is devoted mostly to the persecutions of the Friends in Great Britain and in America. (Pickard's *Life of Whittier*.)

<sup>3</sup> Chalkley's own narrative of this incident, as given in his *Journal*, is as follows: 'To stop their murmuring, I told them they should not need to cast lots, which was usual in such cases, which of us should die first, for I would freely offer up my life to do them good. One said, "God bless you! I will not eat any of you." Another said, "He would die before he would eat any of me," and so said several. I can truly say, on that occasion, at that time, my life was not dear to me, and that I was serious and ingenuous in my proposition: and as I was leaning over the side of the vessel, thoughtfully considering my proposal to the company, and looking in my mind to Him that made me, a very large dolphin came up towards the top or surface of the water, and looked me in the face; and I called the people to put a hook into the sea, and take him, for here is one come to redeem me (I said to them). And they put a hook into the sea, and the fish readily took it and they caught him. He was longer than myself. I think he was about six feet long, and the largest that ever I saw. This plainly showed us that we ought not to distrust the providence of the Almighty. The people were quieted by this act of Providence, and murmured no more. We caught enough to eat plentifully of, till we got into the capes of Delaware.' (WHITTIER.)



And cruel, hungry eyes pursued  
 His portly presence mad for food,  
 With dark hints muttered under breath  
 Of casting lots for life or death,  
 Offered, if Heaven withheld supplies,  
 To be himself the sacrifice.  
 Then, suddenly, as if to save  
 The good man from his living grave, 300  
 A ripple on the water grew,  
 A school of porpoise flashed in view.  
 'Take, eat,' he said, 'and be content;  
 These fishes in my stead are sent  
 By Him who gave the tangled ram  
 To spare the child of Abraham.'

Our uncle, innocent of books,  
 Was rich in lore of fields and brooks,<sup>1</sup>  
 The ancient teachers never dumb  
 Of Nature's unhoused lyceum. 310  
 In moons and tides and weather wise,  
 He read the clouds as prophecies,  
 And foul or fair could well divine,  
 By many an occult hint and sign,  
 Holding the cunning-warded keys  
 To all the woodcraft mysteries;  
 Himself to Nature's heart so near  
 That all her voices in his ear  
 Of beast or bird had meanings clear,  
 Like Apollonius of old, 320  
 Who knew the tales the sparrows told,  
 Or Hermes, who interpreted  
 What the sage cranes of Nilus said;  
 A simple, guileless, childlike man,  
 Content to live where life began;  
 Strong only on his native grounds,  
 The little world of sights and sounds  
 Whose girdle was the parish bounds,  
 Whereof his fondly partial pride  
 The common features magnified, 330  
 As Surrey hills to mountains grew  
 In White of Selborne's loving view, —  
 He told how teal and loon he shot,  
 And how the eagle's eggs he got,  
 The feats on pond and river done,  
 The prodigies of rod and gun;  
 Till, warming with the tales he told,  
 Forgotten was the outside cold,  
 The bitter wind unheeded blew,  
 From ripening corn the pigeons flew, 340  
 The partridge drummed i' the wood, the  
 mink  
 Went fishing down the river-brink;

<sup>1</sup> Compare Emerson's 'Wood-Notes.' On Whittier's uncle, see Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. i, pp. 32-33, and Whittier's *Prose Works*, vol. i, pp. 323-325, 'The Fish I did n't Catch.'

In fields with bean or clover gay,  
 The woodchuck, like a hermit gray,  
 Peered from the doorway of his cell;  
 The muskrat plied the mason's trade,  
 And tier by tier his mud-walls laid;  
 And from the shagbark overhead  
 The grizzled squirrel dropped his shell.

Next, the dear aunt, whose smile of  
 cheer 350  
 And voice in dreams I see and hear —  
 The sweetest woman ever Fate  
 Perverse denied a household mate,  
 Who, lonely, homeless, not the less  
 Found peace in love's unselfishness,  
 And welcome whereso'er she went,  
 A calm and gracious element,  
 Whose presence seemed the sweet in-  
 come  
 And womanly atmosphere of home —  
 Called up her girlhood memories, 360  
 The huskings and the apple-bees,  
 The sleigh-rides and the summer sails,  
 Weaving through all the poor details  
 And homespun warp of circumstance  
 A golden woof-thread of romance.  
 For well she kept her genial mood  
 And simple faith of maidenhood;  
 Before her still a cloud-land lay,  
 The mirage loomed across her way;  
 The morning dew, that dries so soon 370  
 With others, glistened at her noon;  
 Through years of toil and soil and care,  
 From glossy tress to thin gray hair,  
 All unprofaned she held apart  
 The virgin fancies of the heart.  
 Be shame to him of woman born  
 Who hath for such but thought of scorn.

There, too, our elder sister <sup>2</sup> plied  
 Her evening task the stand beside;  
 A full, rich nature, free to trust, 380  
 Truthful and almost sternly just,  
 Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act,  
 And make her generous thought a fact,  
 Keeping with many a light disguise  
 The secret of self-sacrifice.  
 O heart sore-tried! thou hast the best,  
 That Heaven itself could give thee, —  
 rest,  
 Rest from all bitter thoughts and things!  
 How many a poor one's blessing went  
 With thee beneath the low green tent 390  
 Whose curtain never outward swings!

<sup>2</sup> Mary Whittier, 1806-1860. Pickard's *Life*, i, 29.

As one who held herself a part <sup>1</sup>  
 Of all she saw, and let her heart  
 Against the household bosom lean,  
 Upon the motley-braided mat  
 Our youngest and our dearest sat,  
 Lifting her large, sweet, asking eyes,  
 Now bathed in the unfading green  
 And holy peace of Paradise.  
 Oh, looking from some heavenly hill, <sup>400</sup>  
 Or from the shade of saintly palms,  
 Or silver reach of river calms,  
 Do those large eyes behold me still?  
 With me one little year ago: —  
 The chill weight of the winter snow  
 For months upon her grave has lain;  
 And now, when summer south-winds blow  
 And brier and harebell bloom again,  
 I tread the pleasant paths we trod,  
 I see the violet-sprinkled sod <sup>410</sup>  
 Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak  
 The hillside flowers she loved to seek,  
 Yet following me where'er I went  
 With dark eyes full of love's content.  
 The birds are glad; the brier-rose fills  
 The air with sweetness; all the hills  
 Stretch green to June's unclouded sky;  
 But still I wait with ear and eye  
 For something gone which should be nigh,  
 A loss in all familiar things, <sup>420</sup>  
 In flower that blooms, and bird that sings.  
 And yet, dear heart! remembering thee,  
 Am I not richer than of old?  
 Safe in thy immortality,  
 What change can reach the wealth I  
 hold?  
 What chance can mar the pearl and gold  
 Thy love hath left in trust with me?  
 And while in life's late afternoon,  
 Where cool and long the shadows grow,  
 I walk to meet the night that soon <sup>430</sup>  
 Shall shape and shadow overflow,  
 I cannot feel that thou art far,  
 Since near at need the angels are;  
 And when the sunset gates unbar,  
 Shall I not see thee waiting stand,  
 And, white against the evening star,  
 The welcome of thy beckoning hand?  
  
 Brisk wielder of the birch and rule,  
 The master of the district school

<sup>1</sup> On Whittier's sister Elizabeth, his household companion and his closest friend until her death, in 1864, see Pickard's *Life*, vol. i, pp. 29-31; *Whittier-Land*, p. 74; Whittier's poems 'To My Sister,' and 'The Last Eve of Summer;' and her own poems, in the *Riverside* and *Cambridge Editions of Whittier's Works*.

Held at the fire his favored place, <sup>440</sup>  
 Its warm glow lit a laughing face  
 Fresh-hued and fair, where scarce appeared  
 The uncertain prophecy of beard.  
 He teased the mitten-blinded cat,  
 Played cross-pins on my uncle's hat,  
 Sang songs, and told us what befalls  
 In classic Dartmouth's college halls.  
 Born the wild Northern hills among,  
 From whence his yeoman father wrung  
 By patient toil subsistence scant, <sup>450</sup>  
 Not competence and yet not want,  
 He early gained the power to pay  
 His cheerful, self-reliant way;  
 Could doff at ease his scholar's gown  
 To peddle wares from town to town;  
 Or through the long vacation's reach  
 In lonely lowland districts teach,  
 Where all the droll experience found  
 At stranger hearths in boarding round,  
 The moonlit skater's keen delight, <sup>460</sup>  
 The sleigh-drive through the frosty night,  
 The rustic-party, with its rough  
 Accompaniment of blind-man's-buff,  
 And whirling-plate, and forfeits paid,  
 His winter task a pastime made.  
 Happy the snow-locked homes wherein  
 He tuned his merry violin,  
 Or played the athlete in the barn,  
 Or held the good dame's winding-yarn,  
 Or mirth-provoking versions told <sup>470</sup>  
 Of classic legends rare and old,  
 Wherein the scenes of Greece and Rome  
 Had all the commonplace of home,  
 And little seemed at best the odds  
 'Twixt Yankee peddlers and old gods;  
 Where Pindus-born Arachthus took  
 The guise of any grist-mill brook,  
 And dread Olympus at his will  
 Became a huckleberry hill.

A careless boy that night he seemed; <sup>480</sup>  
 But at his desk he had the look  
 And air of one who wisely schemed,  
 And hostage from the future took  
 In trained thought and lore of book.  
 Large-brained, clear-eyed, of such as he  
 Shall Freedom's young apostles be,  
 Who, following in War's bloody trail,  
 Shall every lingering wrong assail;  
 All chains from limb and spirit strike, <sup>490</sup>  
 Uplift the black and white alike;  
 Scatter before their swift advance  
 The darkness and the ignorance,  
 The pride, the lust, the squalid sloth,

Which nurtured Treason's monstrous  
growth,  
Made murder pastime, and the hell  
Of prison-torture possible;  
The cruel lie of caste refute,  
Old forms remould, and substitute  
For Slavery's lash the freeman's will,  
For blind routine, wise-handed skill; 500  
A school-house plant on every hill,  
Stretching in radiate nerve-lines thence  
The quick wires of intelligence;  
Till North and South together brought  
Shall own the same electric thought,  
In peace a common flag salute,  
And, side by side in labor's free  
And unresentful rivalry,  
Harvest the fields wherein they fought.

Another guest that winter night <sup>1</sup> 510  
Flashed back from lustrous eyes the light.  
Unmarked by time, and yet not young,  
The honeyed music of her tongue  
And words of meekness scarcely told  
A nature passionate and bold,  
Strong, self-concentred, spurning guide,  
Its milder features dwarfed beside  
Her unbent will's majestic pride.  
She sat among us, at the best,  
A not unfear'd, half-welcome guest, 520  
Rebuking with her cultured phrase  
Our homeliness of words and ways.  
A certain pard-like, treacherous grace  
Swayed the lithe limbs and dropped the  
lash,  
Lent the white teeth their dazzling flash;  
And under low brows, black with night,  
Rayed out at times a dangerous light;  
The sharp heat-lightnings of her face  
Presaging ill to him whom Fate  
Condemned to share her love or hate. 530  
A woman tropical, intense  
In thought and act, in soul and sense,  
She blended in a like degree  
The vixen and the devotee,  
Revealing with each freak or feint  
The temper of Petruchio's Kate,  
The raptures of Siena's saint.  
Her tapering hand and rounded wrist  
Had facile power to form a fist;

<sup>1</sup> See Whittier's introductory note to 'Snow-Bound.' He wrote to Fields in sending him the poem: 'The portrait of that strange pilgrim, Harriet Livermore. . . who used to visit us, is as near the life as I can give it.' An amusing anecdote of how Miss Livermore found and read this characterization of herself is told in Pickard's *Whittier-Land*, p. 30.

The warm, dark languish of her eyes 540  
Was never safe from wrath's surprise.  
Brows saintly calm and lips devout  
Knew every change of scowl and pout;  
And the sweet voice had notes more high  
And shrill for social battle-cry.

Since then what old cathedral town  
Has missed her pilgrim staff and gown,  
What convent-gate has held its lock  
Against the challenge of her knock!  
Through Smyrna's plague-hushed thorough-  
fares, 550  
Up sea-set Malta's rocky stairs,  
Gray olive slopes of hills that hem  
Thy tombs and shrines, Jerusalem,  
Or startling on her desert throne  
The crazy Queen of Lebanon <sup>2</sup>  
With claims fantastic as her own,  
Her tireless feet have held their way;  
And still, unrestful, bowed, and gray,  
She watches under Eastern skies,  
With hope each day renewed and fresh,  
The Lord's quick coming in the flesh, 561  
Whereof she dreams and prophecies!

Where'er her troubled path may be,  
The Lord's sweet pity with her go!  
The outward wayward life we see,  
The hidden springs we may not know.  
Nor is it given us to discern  
What threads the fatal sisters spun,  
Through what ancestral years has run  
The sorrow with the woman born, 570  
What forged her cruel chain of moods,  
What set her feet in solitudes,  
And held the love within her mute,  
What mingled madness in the blood,  
A life-long discord and annoy,  
Water of tears with oil of joy,  
And hid within the folded bud  
Perversities of flower and fruit.  
It is not ours to separate  
The tangled skein of will and fate, 580  
To show what metes and bounds should  
stand  
Upon the soul's debatable land,  
And between choice and Providence  
Divide the circle of events;  
But He who knows our frame is just,  
Merciful and compassionate,  
And full of sweet assurances

<sup>2</sup> An interesting account of Lady Hester Stanhope may be found in Kinglake's *Rothen*, chap. viii. (Whittier.)

And hope for all the language is,  
That He remembereth we are dust!

At last the great logs, crumbling low, 590  
Sent out a dull and duller glow,  
The bull's-eye watch that hung in view,  
Ticking its weary circuit through,  
Pointed with mutely warning sign  
Its black hand to the hour of nine.  
That sign the pleasant circle broke:  
My uncle ceased his pipe to smoke,  
Knocked from its bowl the refuse gray,  
And laid it tenderly away;  
Then roused himself to safely cover 600  
The dull red brands with ashes over.  
And while, with care, our mother laid  
The work aside, her steps she stayed  
One moment, seeking to express  
Her grateful sense of happiness  
For food and shelter, warmth and health,  
And love's contentment more than wealth,  
With simple wishes (not the weak,  
Vain prayers which no fulfilment seek,  
But such as warm the generous heart, 610  
O'er-prompt to do with Heaven its part)  
That none might lack, that bitter night,  
For bread and clothing, warmth and light.

Within our beds awhile we heard  
The wind that round the gables roared,  
With now and then a ruder shock,  
Which made our very bedsteads rock.  
We heard the loosened clapboards tost,  
The board-nails snapping in the frost;  
And on us, through the unplastered wall,  
Felt the light sifted snow-flakes fall. 621  
But sleep stole on, as sleep will do  
When hearts are light and life is new;  
Faint and more faint the murmurs grew,  
Till in the summer-land of dreams  
They softened to the sound of streams,  
Low stir of leaves, and dip of oars,  
And lapsing waves on quiet shores.

Next morn we wakened with the shout 630  
Of merry voices high and clear;  
And saw the teamsters drawing near  
To break the drifted highways out.  
Down the long hillside treading slow  
We saw the half-buried oxen go,  
Shaking the snow from heads uptost,  
Their straining nostrils white with frost.  
Before our door the straggling train  
Drew up, an added team to gain.  
The elders threshed their hands a-cold,

Passed, with the cider-mug, their jokes  
From lip to lip; the younger folks 641  
Down the loose snow-banks, wrestling,  
rolled,  
Then toiled again the cavalcade  
O'er windy hill, through clogged ravine,  
And woodland paths that wound between  
Low drooping pine-boughs winter-weighted.  
From every barn a team afoot,  
At every house a new recruit,  
Where, drawn by Nature's subtlest law,  
Haply the watchful young men saw 651  
Sweet doorway pictures of the curls  
And curious eyes of merry girls,  
Lifting their hands in mock defence  
Against the snow-ball's compliments,  
And reading in each missive tost  
The charm with Eden never lost.

We heard once more the sleigh-bells' sound;  
And, following where the teamsters led,  
The wise old Doctor went his round,  
Just pausing at our door to say, 660  
In the brief autocratic way  
Of one who, prompt at Duty's call,  
Was free to urge her claim on all,  
That some poor neighbor sick abed  
At night our mother's aid would need.  
For, one in generous thought and deed,  
What mattered in the sufferer's sight  
The Quaker matron's inward light,  
The Doctor's mail of Calvin's creed?  
All hearts confess the saints elect 670  
Who, twain in faith, in love agree,  
And melt not in an acid sect  
The Christian pearl of charity!

So days went on: a week had passed  
Since the great world was heard from last.  
The Almanac we studied o'er,  
Read and reread our little store  
Of books and pamphlets, scarce a score;  
One harmless novel, mostly hid  
From younger eyes, a book forbid, 680  
And poetry (or good or bad,  
A single book was all we had),  
Where Ellwood's meek, drab-skirted Muse,  
A stranger to the heathen Nine,  
Sang, with a somewhat nasal whine,  
The wars of David and the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Ellwood, one of the Society of Friends, a contemporary and friend of Milton, and the suggester of *Paradise Regained*, wrote an epic poem in five books, called *David's*, the life of King David of Israel. He wrote the book, we are told, for his own diversion, so it was not necessary that others should be

At last the floundering carrier bore  
 The village paper to our door.  
 Lo ! broadening outward as we read,  
 To warmer zones the horizon spread; 690  
 In panoramic length unrolled  
 We saw the marvels that it told.  
 Before us passed the painted Creeks,  
 And daft McGregor on his raids  
 In Costa Rica's everglades.  
 And up Taygetos winding slow  
 Rode Ypsilanti's Mainote Greeks,  
 A Turk's head at each saddle-bow !  
 Welcome to us its week-old news,  
 Its corner for the rustic Muse, 700  
 Its monthly gauge of snow and rain,  
 Its record, mingling in a breath  
 The wedding bell and dirge of death:  
 Jest, anecdote, and love-lorn tale,  
 The latest culprit sent to jail;  
 Its hue and cry of stolen and lost,  
 Its vendue sales and goods at cost,  
 And traffic calling loud for gain.  
 We felt the stir of hall and street,  
 The pulse of life that round us beat; 710  
 The chill embargo of the snow  
 Was melted in the genial glow;  
 Wide swung again our ice-locked door,  
 And all the world was ours once more !

Clasp, Angel of the backward look  
 And folded wings of ashen gray  
 And voice of echoes far away,  
 The brazen covers of thy book;  
 The weird palimpsest old and vast,  
 Wherein thou hid'st the spectral past; 720  
 Where, closely mingling, pale and glow  
 The characters of joy and woe;  
 The monographs of outlived years,  
 Or smile-illumed or dim with tears,

Green hills of life that slope to death,  
 And haunts of home, whose vistaed trees  
 Shade off to mournful cypresses  
 With the white amaranths underneath.  
 Even while I look, I can but heed  
 The restless sands' incessant fall, 730  
 Importunate hours that hours succeed,  
 Each clamorous with its own sharp need,  
 And duty keeping pace with all.  
 Shut down and clasp the heavy lids;  
 I hear again the voice that bids  
 The dreamer leave his dream midway  
 For larger hopes and graver fears;  
 Life greatens in these later years,  
 The century's aloe flowers to-day !

Yet, haply, in some lull of life, 740  
 Some Truce of God which breaks its  
 strife,  
 The worldling's eyes shall gather dew,  
 Dreaming in throngful city ways  
 Of winter joys his boyhood knew;  
 And dear and early friends — the few  
 Who yet remain — shall pause to view  
 These Flemish pictures of old days;  
 Sit with me by the homestead hearth,  
 And stretch the hands of memory forth 749  
 To warm them at the wood-fire's blaze !  
 And thanks untraced to lips unknown  
 Shall greet me like the odors blown  
 From unseen meadows newly mown,  
 Or lilies floating in some pond,  
 Wood-fringed, the wayside gaze be-  
 yond;  
 The traveller owns the grateful sense  
 Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,  
 And, pausing, takes with forehead bare  
 The benediction of the air.  
 1865. 1866.

ABRAHAM DAVENPORT<sup>1</sup>

In the old days (a custom laid aside  
 With breeches and cocked hats) the people  
 sent

diverted by it. Ellwood's autobiography, a quaint and  
 delightful book, may be found in Howells's series of  
*Choice Autobiographies*. (*Riverside Literature Series*.)

<sup>1</sup> The famous Dark Day of New England, May 19,  
 1780, was a physical puzzle for many years to our ances-  
 tors, but its occurrence brought something more than  
 philosophical speculation into the minds of those who  
 passed through it. The incident of Colonel Abraham  
 Davenport's sturdy protest is a matter of history.  
 (WHITTIER.)

Their wisest men to make the public laws.  
 And so, from a brown homestead, where  
 the Sound  
 Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas,  
 Waved over by the woods of Rippowams,  
 And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil  
 deaths,  
 Stamford sent up to the councils of the  
 State  
 Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport.

'T was on a May-day of the far old year  
 Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell 11

Over the bloom and sweet life of the  
 Spring,  
 Over the fresh earth and the heaven of  
 noon,  
 A horror of great darkness, like the night  
 In day of which the Norland sagas tell, —  
 The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung  
 sky  
 Was black with ominous clouds, save where  
 its rim  
 Was fringed with a dull glow, like that  
 which climbs  
 The crater's sides from the red hell below.  
 Birds ceased to sing, and all the barn-yard  
 fowls  
 Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars  
 Lowed, and looked homeward; bats on  
 leathern wings  
 Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;  
 Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew  
 sharp  
 To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet  
 shatter  
 The black sky, that the dreadful face of  
 Christ  
 Might look from the rent clouds, not as He  
 looked  
 A loving guest at Bethany, but stern  
 As Justice and inexorable Law.

Meanwhile in the old State House, dim  
 as ghosts,  
 Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,  
 Trembling beneath their legislative robes.  
 'It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us ad-  
 journ,'  
 Some said; and then, as if with one accord,  
 All eyes were turned to Abraham Daven-  
 port.  
 He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice  
 The intolerable hush. 'This well may be  
 The Day of Judgment which the world  
 awaits;  
 But be it so or not, I only know  
 My present duty, and my Lord's command  
 To occupy till He come. So at the post  
 Where He hath set me in his providence,  
 I choose, for one, to meet Him face to  
 face, —  
 No faithless servant frightened from my  
 task,  
 But ready when the Lord of the harvest  
 calls;  
 And therefore, with all reverence, I would  
 say,

Let God do his work, we will see to  
 ours.  
 Bring in the candles.' And they brought  
 them in.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker  
 read,  
 Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands,  
 An act to amend an act to regulate  
 The shad and alewife fisheries. Where-  
 upon  
 Wisely and well spake Abraham Daven-  
 port,  
 Straight to the question, with no figures of  
 speech  
 Save the ten Arab signs, yet not without  
 The shrewd dry humor natural to the man:  
 His awe-struck colleagues listening all the  
 while,  
 Between the pauses of his argument,  
 To hear the thunder of the wrath of God  
 Break from the hollow trumpet of the  
 cloud.

And there he stands in memory to this  
 day,  
 Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen  
 Against the background of unnatural dark,  
 A witness to the ages as they pass,  
 That simple duty hath no place for fear.

1866.

### THE DEAD SHIP OF HARPS- WELL

WHAT flecks the outer gray beyond  
 The sundown's golden trail?  
 The white flash of a sea-bird's wing,  
 Or gleam of slanting sail?  
 Let young eyes watch from Neck and Point,  
 And sea-worn elders pray, —  
 The ghost of what was once a ship  
 Is sailing up the bay!

From gray sea-fog, from icy drift,  
 From peril and from pain,  
 The home-bound fisher greets thy lights,  
 O hundred-harbored Maine!  
 But many a keel shall seaward turn,  
 And many a sail outstand,  
 When, tall and white, the Dead Ship looms  
 Against the dusk of land.

She rounds the headland's bristling pines;  
 She threads the isle-set bay;



No spur of breeze can speed her on,  
Nor ebb of tide delay. 20  
Old men still walk the Isle of Orr  
Who tell her date and name,  
Old shipwrights sit in Freeport yards  
Who hewed her oaken frame.

What weary doom of baffled quest,  
Thou sad sea-ghost, is thine?  
What makes thee in the haunts of home  
A wonder and a sign?  
No foot is on thy silent deck,  
Upon thy helm no hand; 30  
No ripple bath the soundless wind  
That smites thee from the land!

For never comes the ship to port,  
Howe'er the breeze may be;  
Just when she nears the waiting shore  
She drifts again to sea.  
No tack of sail, nor turn of helm,  
Nor sheer of veering side,  
Stern-fore she drives to sea and night,  
Against the wind and tide. 40

In vain o'er Harpswell Neck the star  
Of evening guides her in;  
In vain for her the lamps are lit  
Within thy tower, Seguin!  
In vain the harbor-boat shall hail,  
In vain the pilot call;  
No hand shall reef his spectral sail,  
Or let her anchor fall.

Shake, brown old wives, with dreary joy,  
Your gray-head hints of ill; 50  
And, over sick-beds whispering low,  
Your prophecies fulfil.  
Some home amid yon birchen trees  
Shall drape its door with woe;  
And slowly where the Dead Ship sails,  
The burial boat shall row!

From Wolf Neck and from Flying Point,  
From island and from main,  
From sheltered cove and tided creek,  
Shall glide the funeral train. 60  
The dead-boat with the bearers four,  
The mourners at her stern,—  
And one shall go the silent way  
Who shall no more return!

And men shall sigh, and women weep,  
Whose dear ones pale and pine,  
And sadly over sunset seas

Await the ghostly sign. \*  
They know not that its sails are filled  
By pity's tender breath, 70  
Nor see the Angel at the helm  
Who steers the Ship of Death!  
1866.

OUR MASTER<sup>1</sup>

IMMORTAL Love, forever full,  
Forever flowing free,  
Forever shared, forever whole,  
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name  
All other names above;  
Love only knoweth whence it came  
And comprehendeth love.

Blow, winds of God, awake and blow  
The mists of earth away! 10  
Shine out, O Light Divine, and show  
How wide and far we stray!

Hush every lip, close every book,  
The strife of tongues forbear;  
Why forward reach, or backward look,  
For love that clasps like air?

We may not climb the heavenly steeps  
To bring the Lord Christ down:  
In vain we search the lowest deeps,  
For Him no depths can drown. 20

Nor holy bread, nor blood of grape,  
The lineaments restore  
Of Him we know in outward shape  
And in the flesh no more.

He cometh not a king to reign;  
The world's long hope is dim;  
The weary centuries watch in vain  
The clouds of heaven for Him.

Death comes, life goes; the asking eye  
And ear are answerless; 30  
The grave is dumb, the hollow sky  
Is sad with silentness.

The letter fails, and systems fall,  
And every symbol wanes;

<sup>1</sup> Five of the best-known hymns by Whittier are taken from this poem, beginning with the first, seventh, sixteenth, twenty-fourth, and thirty-fifth stanzas.



The Spirit over-brooding all  
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above  
Or earth below they look,  
Who know with John his smile of love,  
With Peter his rebuke.

40

In joy of inward peace, or sense  
Of sorrow over sin,  
He is his own best evidence,  
His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,  
Nor dream of bards and seers,  
No dead fact stranded on the shore  
Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet  
A present help is He;  
And faith has still its Olivet,  
And love its Galilee.

50

The healing of his seamless dress  
Is by our beds of pain;  
We touch Him in life's throng and press,  
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said  
Our lips of childhood frame,  
The last low whispers of our dead  
Are burdened with his name.

60

Our Lord and Master of us all!  
Whate'er our name or sign,  
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,  
We test our lives by thine.

Thou judgest us; thy purity  
Doth all our lusts condemn;  
The love that draws us nearer Thee  
Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to thy sight,  
And, naked to thy glance,  
Our secret sins are in the light  
Of thy pure countenance.

70

Thy healing pains, a keen distress  
Thy tender light shines in;  
Thy sweetness is the bitterness,  
Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,  
Thou dost our service own;

We bring our varying gifts to Thee,  
And Thou rejectest none.

80

To Thee our full humanity,  
Its joys and pains, belong;  
The wrong of man to man on Thee  
Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates Thee, who loves becomes  
Therein to Thee allied;  
All sweet accords of hearts and homes  
In Thee are multiplied.

Deep strike thy roots, O heavenly Vine,  
Within our earthly sod,  
Most human and yet most divine,  
The flower of man and God!

90

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight  
Thy presence maketh one,  
As through transfigured clouds of white  
We trace the noon-day sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,  
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,  
We know in Thee the fatherhood  
And heart of God revealed.

100

We faintly hear, we dimly see,  
In differing phrase we pray;  
But, dim or clear, we own in Thee  
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render Thee  
Is still our Father's own;  
No jealous claim or rivalry  
Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do thy will is more than praise,  
As words are less than deeds,  
And simple trust can find thy ways  
We miss with chart of creeds.

110

No pride of self thy service hath,  
No place for me and mine;  
Our human strength is weakness, death  
Our life, apart from thine.

Apart from Thee all gain is loss,  
All labor vainly done;  
The solemn shadow of thy Cross  
Is better than the sun.

120

Alone, O Love ineffable!  
Thy saving name is given;

To turn aside from Thee is hell,  
To walk with Thee is heaven !

How vain, secure in all Thou art,  
Our noisy championship !  
The sighing of the contrite heart  
Is more than flattering lip.

Not thine the bigot's partial plea,  
Nor thine the zealot's ban; 130  
Thou well canst spare a love of Thee  
Which ends in hate of man.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,  
What may thy service be ? —  
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,  
But simply following Thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,  
We pile no graven stone;  
He serves Thee best who loveth most  
His brothers and thy own. 140

Thy litanies, sweet offices  
Of love and gratitude;  
Thy sacramental liturgies  
The joy of doing good.

In vain shall waves of incense drift  
The vaulted nave around,  
In vain the minster turret lift  
Its brazen weights of sound.

The heart must ring thy Christmas bells,  
Thy inward altars raise; 150  
Its faith and hope thy canticles,  
And its obedience praise !

1866 ?

### THE WORSHIP OF NATURE

The harp at Nature's advent strung  
Has never ceased to play;  
The song the stars of morning sung  
Has never died away.

And prayer is made, and praise is given,  
By all things near and far;  
The ocean looketh up to heaven,  
And mirrors every star.

Its waves are kneeling on the strand,  
As kneels the human knee, 10  
Their white locks bowing to the sand,  
The priesthood of the sea !

They pour their glittering treasures forth,  
Their gifts of pearl they bring,  
And all the listening hills of earth  
Take up the song they sing.

The green earth sends her incense up  
From many a mountain shrine;  
From folded leaf and dewy cup  
She pours her sacred wine. 20

The mists above the morning rills  
Rise white as wings of prayer;  
The altar-curtains of the hills  
Are sunset's purple air.

The winds with hymns of praise are loud,  
Or low with sobs of pain, —  
The thunder-organ of the cloud,  
The dropping tears of rain.

With drooping head and branches crossed  
The twilight forest grieves, 30  
Or speaks with tongues of Pentecost  
From all its sunlit leaves.

The blue sky is the temple's arch,  
Its transept earth and air,  
The music of its starry march  
The chorus of a prayer.

So Nature keeps the reverent frame  
With which her years began,  
And all her signs and voices shame  
The prayerless heart of man. 40

1867.

### THE MEETING

THE elder folks shook hands at last,  
Down seat by seat the signal passed.  
To simple ways like ours unused,  
Half solemnized and half amused,  
With long-drawn breath and shrug, my  
guest

His sense of glad relief expressed.  
Outside, the hills lay warm in sun;  
The cattle in the meadow-run  
Stood half-leg deep; a single bird  
The green repose above us stirred. 10

'What part or lot have you,' he said,  
'In these dull rites of drowsy-head ?  
Is silence worship ? Seek it where  
It soothes with dreams the summer air,  
Not in this close and rude-benched hall,

But where soft lights and shadows fall,  
 And all the slow, sleep-walking hours  
 Glide soundless over grass and flowers !  
 From time and place and form apart,  
 Its holy ground the human heart, 20  
 Nor ritual-bound nor templeward  
 Walks the free spirit of the Lord !  
 Our common Master did not pen  
 His followers up from other men;  
 His service liberty indeed,  
 He built no church, He framed no creed;  
 But while the saintly Pharisee  
 Made broader his phylactery,  
 As from the synagogue was seen  
 The dusty-sandalled Nazarene 30  
 Through ripening cornfields lead the way  
 Upon the awful Sabbath day,  
 His sermons were the healthful talk  
 That shorter made the mountain-walk,  
 His wayside texts were flowers and birds,  
 Where mingled with his gracious words  
 The rustle of the tamarisk-tree  
 And ripple-wash of Galilee.'

'Thy words are well, O friend,' I said;  
 'Unmeasured and unlimited, 40  
 With noiseless slide of stone to stone,  
 The mystic Church of God has grown.  
 Invisible and silent stands  
 The temple never made with hands,  
 Unheard the voices still and small  
 Of its unseen confessional.  
 He needs no special place of prayer  
 Whose hearing ear is everywhere;  
 He brings not back the childish days  
 That ringed the earth with stones of praise,  
 Roofed Karnak's hall of gods, and laid 51  
 The plinths of Philæ's colonnade.  
 Still less He owns the selfish good  
 And sickly growth of solitude, —  
 The worthless grace that, out of sight,  
 Flowers in the desert anchorite;  
 Dissevered from the suffering whole,  
 Love hath no power to save a soul.  
 Not out of Self, the origin  
 And native air and soil of sin, 60  
 The living waters spring and flow,  
 The trees with leaves of healing grow.

'Dream not, O friend, because I seek  
 This quiet shelter twice a week,  
 I better deem its pine-laid floor  
 Than breezy hill or sea-sung shore;  
 But nature is not solitude:  
 She crowds us with her thronging wood;

Her many hands reach out to us,  
 Her many tongues are garrulous; 70  
 Perpetual riddles of surprise  
 She offers to our ears and eyes;  
 She will not leave our senses still,  
 But drags them captive at her will:  
 And, making earth too great for heaven,  
 She hides the Giver in the given.

'And so I find it well to come  
 For deeper rest to this still room,  
 For here the habit of the soul  
 Feels less the outer world's control; 80  
 The strength of mutual purpose pleads  
 More earnestly our common needs;  
 And from the silence multiplied  
 By these still forms on either side,  
 The world that time and sense have known  
 Falls off and leaves us God alone.

'Yet rarely through the charmed repose  
 Unmixed the stream of motive flows,  
 A flavor of its many springs,  
 The tints of earth and sky it brings; 90  
 In the still waters needs must be  
 Some shade of human sympathy;  
 And here, in its accustomed place,  
 I look on memory's dearest face;  
 The blind by-sitter guesseth not  
 What shadow haunts that vacant spot;  
 No eyes save mine alone can see  
 The love wherewith it welcomes me !  
 And still, with those alone my kin,  
 In doubt and weakness, want and sin, 100  
 I bow my head, my heart I bare,  
 As when that face was living there,  
 And strive (too oft, alas ! in vain)  
 The peace of simple trust to gain,  
 Fold fancy's restless wings, and lay  
 The idols of my heart away.

'Welcome the silence all unbroken,  
 Nor less the words of fitness spoken, —  
 Such golden words as hers for whom  
 Our autumn flowers have just made 110  
 room;  
 Whose hopeful utterance through and  
 through  
 The freshness of the morning blew;  
 Who loved not less the earth that light  
 Fell on it from the heavens in sight,  
 But saw in all fair forms more fair  
 The Eternal beauty mirrored there.  
 Whose eighty years but added grace  
 And saintlier meaning to her face, —

The look of one who bore away  
 Glad tidings from the hills of day, 120  
 While all our hearts went forth to meet  
 The coming of her beautiful feet !  
 Or haply hers, whose pilgrim tread  
 Is in the paths where Jesus led;  
 Who dreams her childhood's sabbath dream  
 By Jordan's willow-shaded stream,  
 And, of the hymns of hope and faith,  
 Sung by the monks of Nazareth,  
 Hears pious echoes, in the call  
 To prayer, from Moslem minarets fall, 130  
 Repeating where his works were wrought  
 The lesson that her Master taught,  
 Of whom an elder Sibyl gave,  
 The prophecies of Cumæ's cave !

' I ask no organ's soulless breath  
 To drone the themes of life and death,  
 No altar candle-lit by day,  
 No ornate wordsman's rhetoric-play,  
 No cool philosophy to teach  
 Its bland audacities of speech 140  
 To double-tasked idolaters  
 Themselves their gods and worshippers,  
 No pulpit hammered by the fist  
 Of loud-asserting dogmatist,  
 Who borrows for the Hand of love  
 The smoking thunderbolts of Jove.  
 I know how well the fathers taught,  
 What work the later schoolmen wrought;  
 I reverence old-time faith and men,  
 But God is near us now as then; 150  
 His force of love is still unspent,  
 His hate of sin as imminent;  
 And still the measure of our needs  
 Outgrows the cramping bounds of creeds;  
 The manna gathered yesterday  
 Already savors of decay;  
 Doubts to the world's child-heart unknown  
 Question us now from star and stone;  
 Too little or too much we know,  
 And sight is swift and faith is slow; 160  
 The power is lost to self-deceive  
 With shallow forms of make-believe.  
 We walk at high noon, and the bells  
 Call to a thousand oracles,  
 But the sound deafens, and the light  
 Is stronger than our dazzled sight;  
 The letters of the sacred Book  
 Glimmer and swim beneath our look;  
 Still struggles in the Age's breast  
 With deepening agony of quest 170  
 The old entreaty: " Art thou He,  
 Or look we for the Christ to be ? "

' God should be most where man is least:  
 So, where is neither church nor priest,  
 And never rag of form or creed  
 To clothe the nakedness of need, —  
 Where farmer-folk in silence meet, —  
 I turn my bell-unsummoned feet;  
 I lay the critic's glass aside,  
 I tread upon my lettered pride, 180  
 And, lowest-seated, testify  
 To the oneness of humanity;  
 Confess the universal want,  
 And share whatever Heaven may grant.  
 He findeth not who seeks his own,  
 The soul is lost that's saved alone.  
 Not on one favored forehead fell  
 Of old the fire-tongued miracle,  
 But flamed o'er all the thronging host  
 The baptism of the Holy Ghost; 190  
 Heart answers heart: in one desire  
 The blending lines of prayer aspire;  
 " Where, in my name, meet two or three,"  
 Our Lord hath said, " I there will be ! "

' So sometimes comes to soul and sense  
 The feeling which is evidence  
 That very near about us lies  
 The realm of spiritual mysteries.  
 The sphere of the supernal powers  
 Impinges on this world of ours. 200  
 The low and dark horizon lifts,  
 To light the scenic terror shifts;  
 The breath of a diviner air  
 Blows down the answer of a prayer:  
 That all our sorrow, pain, and doubt  
 A great compassion clasps about,  
 And law and goodness, love and force,  
 Are wedded fast beyond divorce.  
 Then duty leaves to love its task,  
 The beggar Self forgets to ask; 210  
 With smile of trust and folded hands,  
 The passive soul in waiting stands  
 To feel, as flowers the sun and dew,  
 The One true Life its own renew.

' So to the calmly gathered thought  
 The innermost of truth is taught,  
 The mystery dimly understood,  
 That love of God is love of good,  
 And, chiefly, its divinest trace  
 In Him of Nazareth's holy face; 220  
 That to be saved is only this, —  
 Salvation from our selfishness,  
 From more than elemental fire,  
 The soul's unsanctified desire,  
 From sin itself, and not the pain

That warns us of its chafing chain;  
 That worship's deeper meaning lies  
 In mercy, and not sacrifice,  
 Not proud humilities of sense  
 And posturing of penitence, 230  
 But love's unforced obedience;  
 That Book and Church and Day are given  
 For man, not God, — for earth, not  
 heaven, —

The blessed means to holiest ends,  
 Not masters, but benignant friends;  
 That the dear Christ dwells not afar,  
 The king of some remoter star,  
 Listening, at times, with flattered ear  
 To homage wrung from selfish fear,  
 But here, amidst the poor and blind, 240  
 The bound and suffering of our kind,  
 In works we do, in prayers we pray,  
 Life of our life, He lives to-day.'

1868.

## AMONG THE HILLS<sup>1</sup>

### PRELUDE

ALONG the roadside, like the flowers of  
 gold  
 That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,  
 Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,  
 And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers  
 Hang motionless upon their upright staves.  
 The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,  
 Wing-weary with its long flight from the  
 south,  
 Unfelt; yet, closely scanned, yon maple  
 leaf  
 With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,  
 Confesses it. The locust by the wall 10  
 Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.  
 A single hay-cart down the dusty road  
 Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep  
 On the load's top. Against the neighbor-  
 ing hill,  
 Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,  
 The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift  
 still

<sup>1</sup> The lady of the poem 'Among the Hills' was purely imaginary. I was charmed with the scenery in Tamworth and West Ossipee, and tried to call attention to it in a story. . . . With the long range of the Sandwich Mountains and Chocorus on one hand, and the rugged masses of Ossipee on the other, it is really one of the most picturesque situations in the State. (WHITTIER, in a letter of May 11, 1881, quoted in Pickard's *Life*, vol. ii, p. 669. See also pp. 536-538.) The poem was at first called 'A Summer Idyl,' and planned as a companion piece to the 'Snow-Bound, a Winter Idyl.'

Defied the dog-star. Through the open  
 door  
 A drowsy smell of flowers — gray heli-  
 trope,  
 And white sweet clover, and shy mignon-  
 ette —  
 Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends —  
 To the pervading symphony of peace.

No time is this for hands long over-worn  
 To task their strength: and (unto Him be  
 praise  
 Who giveth quietness!) the stress and  
 strain  
 Of years that did the work of centuries  
 Have ceased, and we can draw our breath  
 once more  
 Freely and full. So, as yon harvesters  
 Make glad their nooning underneath the  
 elms

With tale and riddle and old snatch of song,  
 I lay aside grave themes, and idly turn 30  
 The leaves of memory's sketch-book, dream-  
 ing o'er

Old summer pictures of the quiet hills,  
 And human life, as quiet, at their feet.

And yet not idly all. A farmer's son,  
 Proud of field-lore and harvest craft, and  
 feeling

All their fine possibilities, how rich  
 And restful even poverty and toil  
 Become when beauty, harmony, and love  
 Sit at their humble hearth as angels sat  
 At evening in the patriarch's tent, when  
 man 40

Makes labor noble, and his farmer's frock  
 The symbol of a Christian chivalry  
 Tender and just and generous to her  
 Who clothes with grace all duty; still, I  
 know

Too well the picture has another side, —  
 How wearily the grind of toil goes on  
 Where love is wanting, how the eye and  
 ear

And heart are starved amidst the plenitude  
 Of nature, and how hard and colorless  
 Is life without an atmosphere. I look 50  
 Across the lapse of half a century,  
 And call to mind old homesteads, where no  
 flower

Told that the spring had come, but evil  
 weeds,  
 Nightshade and rough-leaved burdock in  
 the place

Of the sweet doorway greeting of the rose  
And honeysuckle, where the house walls  
seemed

Blistering in sun, without a tree or vine  
To cast the tremulous shadow of its leaves  
Across the curtainless windows, from whose  
panes

Fluttered the signal rags of shiftlessness. 60  
Within, the cluttered kitchen floor, un-  
washed

(Broom-clean I think they called it) ; the  
best room

Stifling with cellar-damp, shut from the air  
In hot midsummer, bookless, pictureless  
Save the inevitable sampler hung

Over the fireplace, or a mourning piece,  
A green-haired woman, peony-cheeked, be-  
neath

Impossible willows; the wide-throated  
hearth

Bristling with faded pine-boughs half con-  
cealing

The piled-up rubbish at the chimney's  
back; 70

And, in sad keeping with all things about  
them,

Shrill, querulous women, sour and sullen  
men,

Untidy, loveless, old before their time,  
With scarce a human interest save their  
own

Monotonous round of small economies,  
Or the poor scandal of the neighborhood;  
Blind to the beauty everywhere revealed,  
Treading the May-flowers with regardless  
feet;

For them the song-sparrow and the bobolink  
Sang not, nor winds made music in the  
leaves; 80

For them in vain October's holocaust  
Burned, gold and crimson, over all the hills,  
The sacramental mystery of the woods.  
Church-goers, fearful of the unseen Powers,  
But grumbling over pulpit-tax and pew-  
rent,

Saving, as shrewd economists, their souls  
And winter pork with the least possible  
outlay

Of salt and sanctity; in daily life  
Showing as little actual comprehension  
Of Christian charity and love and duty 90  
As if the Sermon on the Mount had been  
Outdated like a last year's almanac:  
Rich in broad woodlands and in half-tilled  
fields,

And yet so pinched and bare and comfort-  
less,

The veriest straggler limping on his rounds,  
The sun and air his sole inheritance,  
Laughed at a poverty that paid its taxes,  
And hugged his rags in self-complacency !

Not such should be the homesteads of a land  
Where whose wisely wills and acts may  
dwell 100

As king and lawgiver, in broad-acred state,  
With beauty, art, taste, culture, books, to  
make

His hour of leisure richer than a life  
Of fourscore to the barons of old time.

Our yeoman should be equal to his home  
Set in the fair, green valleys, purple walled,  
A man to match his mountains, not to creep  
Dwarfed and abased below them. I would  
fain

In this light way (of which I needs must  
own

With the knife-grinder of whom Canning  
sings, 110

'Story, God bless you ! I have none to tell  
you !')

Invite the eye to see and heart to feel  
The beauty and the joy within their reach, —  
Home, and home loves, and the beatitudes  
Of nature free to all. Haply in years  
That wait to take the places of our own,  
Heard where some breezy balcony looks  
down

On happy homes, or where the lake in the  
moon

Sleeps dreaming of the mountains, fair as  
Ruth,

In the old Hebrew pastoral, at the feet 120  
Of Boaz, even this simple lay of mine  
May seem the burden of a prophecy,  
Finding its late fulfilment in a change  
Slow as the oak's growth, lifting manhood up  
Through broader culture, finer manners,  
love,

And reverence, to the level of the hills.

O Golden Age whose light is of the dawn,  
And not of sunset, forward, not behind,  
Flood the new heavens and earth, and with  
thee bring

All the old virtues, whatsoever things 130  
Are pure and honest and of good repute,  
But add thereto whatever bard has sung  
Or seer has told of when in trance and dream  
They saw the Happy Isles of prophecy !



Let Justice hold her scale, and Truth divide  
Between the right and wrong; but give the  
heart

The freedom of its fair inheritance;  
Let the poor prisoner, cramped and starved  
so long,

At Nature's table feast his ear and eye  
With joy and wonder; let all harmonies 140  
Of sound, form, color, motion, wait upon  
The princely guest, whether in soft attire  
Of leisure clad, or the coarse frock of toil,  
And, lending life to the dead form of faith,  
Give human nature reverence for the sake  
Of One who bore it, making it divine  
With the ineffable tenderness of God;  
Let common need, the brotherhood of  
prayer,

The heirship of an unknown destiny, 149  
The unsolved mystery round about us, make  
A man more precious than the gold of Ophir.  
Sacred, inviolate, unto whom all things  
Should minister, as outward types and signs  
Of the eternal beauty which fulfils  
The one great purpose of creation, Love,  
The sole necessity of Earth and Heaven!

For weeks the clouds had raked the hills  
And vexed the vales with raining,  
And all the woods were sad with mist,  
And all the brooks complaining. 160

At last, a sudden night-storm tore  
The mountain veils asunder,  
And swept the valleys clean before  
The besom of the thunder.

Through Sandwich notch the west-wind  
sang  
Good morrow to the cotter;  
And once again Chocorua's horn  
Of shadow pierced the water.

Above his broad lake, Ossipee,  
Once more the sunshine wearing, 170  
Stooped, tracing on that silver shield  
His grim armorial bearing.

Clear drawn against the hard blue sky,  
The peaks had winter's keenness;  
And, close on autumn's frost, the vales  
Had more than June's fresh greenness.

Again the sodden forest floors  
With golden lights were checkered,

Once more rejoicing leaves in wind  
And sunshine danced and flickered. 180

It was as if the summer's late  
Atoning for its sadness  
Had borrowed every season's charm  
To end its days in gladness.

I call to mind those banded vales  
Of shadow and of shining,  
Through which, my hostess at my side,  
I drove in day's declining.

We held our sidelong way above  
The river's whitening shallows, 190  
By homesteads old, with wide-flung barns  
Swept through and through by swallows;

By maple orchards, belts of pine  
And larches climbing darkly  
The mountain slopes, and, over all,  
The great peaks rising starkly.

You should have seen that long hill-range  
With gaps of brightness riven, —  
How through each pass and hollow streamed  
The purpling lights of heaven, — 200

Rivers of gold-mist flowing down  
From far celestial fountains, —  
The great sun flaming through the rifts  
Beyond the wall of mountains!

We paused at last where home-bound cows  
Brought down the pasture's treasure,  
And in the barn the rhythmic flails  
Beat out a harvest measure.

We heard the night-hawk's sullen plunge,  
The crow his tree-mates calling: 210  
The shadows lengthening down the slopes  
About our feet were falling.

And through them smote the level sun  
In broken lines of splendor,  
Touched the gray rocks and made the green  
Of the shorn grass more tender.

The maples bending o'er the gate,  
Their arch of leaves just tinted  
With yellow warmth, the golden glow  
Of coming autumn hinted. 220

Keen white between the farm-house showed,  
And smiled on porch and trellis



The fair democracy of flowers  
That equals cot and palace.

And weaving garlands for her dog,  
Twixt chidings and caresses,  
A human flower of childhood shook  
The sunshine from her tresses.

On either hand we saw the signs  
Of fancy and of shrewdness, 230  
Where taste had wound its arms of vines  
Round thrift's uncomely rudeness.

The sun-brown farmer in his frock  
Shook hands, and called to Mary:  
Bare-armed, as Juno might, she came,  
White-aproned from her dairy.

Her air, her smile, her motions, told  
Of womanly completeness;  
A music as of household songs  
Was in her voice of sweetness. 240

Not fair alone in curve and line,  
But something more and better,  
The secret charm eluding art,  
Its spirit, not its letter; —

An inborn grace that nothing lacked  
Of culture or appliance, —  
The warmth of genial courtesy,  
The calm of self-reliance.

Before her queenly womanhood  
How dared our hostess utter 250  
The paltry errand of her need  
To buy her fresh-churned butter?

She led the way with housewife pride,  
Her goodly store disclosing,  
Full tenderly the golden balls  
With practised hands disposing.

Then, while along the western hills  
We watched the changeful glory  
Of sunset, on our homeward way,  
I heard her simple story. 260

The early crickets sang; the stream  
Plashed through my friend's narration:  
Her rustic patois of the hills  
Lost in my free translation.

'More wise,' she said, 'than those who swarm  
Our hills in middle summer,

She came, when June's first roses blow,  
To greet the early comer.

'From school and ball and rout she came,  
The city's fair, pale daughter, 270  
To drink the wine of mountain air  
Beside the Bearcamp Water.

'Her step grew firmer on the hills  
That watch our homesteads over;  
On cheek and lip, from summer fields,  
She caught the bloom of clover.

'For health comes sparkling in the streams  
From cool Chocorua stealing:  
There's iron in our northern winds;  
Our pines are trees of healing. 280

'She sat beneath the broad-armed elms  
That skirt the mowing meadow,  
And watched the gentle west-wind weave  
The grass with shine and shadow.

'Beside her, from the summer heat  
To share her grateful screening,  
With forehead bared, the farmer stood,  
Upon his pitchfork leaning.

'Framed in its damp, dark locks, his face  
Had nothing mean or common, — 290  
Strong, manly, true, the tenderness  
And pride beloved of woman.

'She looked up, glowing with the health  
The country air had brought her,  
And, laughing, said: "You lack a wife,  
Your mother lacks a daughter.

"To mend your frock and bake your bread  
You do not need a lady:  
Be sure among these brown old homes  
Is some one waiting ready, — 300

"Some fair, sweet girl with skilful hand  
And cheerful heart for treasure,  
Who never played with ivory keys,  
Or danced the polka's measure."

'He bent his black brows to a frown,  
He set his white teeth tightly.  
"T is well," he said, "for one like you  
To choose for me so lightly.

"You think because my life is rude  
I take no note of sweetness: 310

I tell you love has naught to do  
With meetness or unmeetness.

“Itself its best excuse, it asks  
No leave of pride or fashion  
When silken zone or homespun frock  
It stirs with throbs of passion.

“You think me deaf and blind: you bring  
Your winning graces hither  
As free as if from cradle-time  
We two had played together. 320

“You tempt me with your laughing eyes,  
Your cheek of sundown’s blushes,  
A motion as of waving grain,  
A music as of thrushes.

“The plaything of your summer sport,  
The spells you weave around me  
You cannot at your will undo,  
Nor leave me as you found me.

“You go as lightly as you came,  
Your life is well without me; 330  
What care you that these hills will close  
Like prison-walls about me?

“No mood is mine to seek a wife,  
Or daughter for my mother:  
Who loves you loses in that love  
All power to love another!

“I dare your pity or your scorn,  
With pride your own exceeding;  
I fling my heart into your lap  
Without a word of pleading.” 340

‘She looked up in his face of pain  
So archly, yet so tender:  
“And if I lend you mine,” she said,  
“Will you forgive the lender?”

“Nor frock nor tan can hide the man;  
And see you not, my farmer,  
How weak and fond a woman waits  
Behind the silken armor?

“I love you: on that love alone,  
And not my worth, presuming, 350  
Will you not trust for summer fruit  
The tree in May-day blooming?”

‘Alone the hangbird overhead,  
His hair-swung cradle straining,

Looked down to see love’s miracle, —  
The giving that is gaining.

‘And so the farmer found a wife,  
His mother found a daughter:  
There looks no happier home than hers  
On pleasant Bearcamp Water. 360

‘Flowers spring to blossom where she walks  
The careful ways of duty;  
Our hard, stiff lines of life with her  
Are flowing curves of beauty.

‘Our homes are cheerier for her sake,  
Our door-yards brighter blooming,  
And all about the social air  
Is sweeter for her coming.

‘Unspoken homilies of peace  
Her daily life is preaching; 370  
The still refreshment of the dew  
Is her unconscious teaching.

‘And never tenderer hand than hers  
Unknits the brow of ailing;  
Her garments to the sick man’s ear  
Have music in their trailing.

‘And when, in pleasant harvest moons,  
The youthful huskers gather,  
Or sleigh-drives on the mountain ways  
Defy the winter weather, — 380

‘In sugar-camps, when south and warm  
The winds of March are blowing,  
And sweetly from its thawing veins  
The maple’s blood is flowing, —

‘In summer, where some lilled pond  
Its virgin zone is baring,  
Or where the ruddy autumn fire  
Lights up the apple-paring, —

‘The coarseness of a ruder time  
Her finer mirth displaces, 390  
A subtler sense of pleasure fills  
Each rustic sport she graces.

‘Her presence lends its warmth and health  
To all who come before it.  
If woman lost us Eden, such  
As she alone restore it.

‘For larger life and wiser aims  
The farmer is her debtor;

**Who holds to his another's heart  
Must needs be worse or better.** 400

**' Through her his civic service shows  
A purer-toned ambition;  
No double consciousness divides  
The man and politician.**

**' In party's doubtful ways he trusts  
Her instincts to determine;  
At the loud polls, the thought of her  
Recalls Christ's Mountain Sermon.**

**' He owns her logic of the heart,  
And wisdom of unreason, 410  
Supplying, while he doubts and weighs,  
The needed word in season.**

**' He sees with pride her richer thought,  
Her fancy's freer ranges;  
And love thus deepened to respect  
Is proof against all changes.**

**' And if she walks at ease in ways  
His feet are slow to travel,  
And if she reads with cultured eyes  
What his may scarce unravel, 420**

**' Still clearer, for her keener sight  
Of beauty and of wonder,  
He learns the meaning of the hills  
He dwelt from childhood under.**

**' And higher, warmed with summer lights,  
Or winter-crowned and hoary,  
The ridged horizon lifts for him  
Its inner veils of glory.**

**' He has his own free, bookless lore,  
The lessons nature taught him, 430  
The wisdom which the woods and hills  
And toiling men have brought him:**

**' The steady force of will whereby  
Her flexile grace seems sweeter;  
The sturdy counterpoise which makes  
Her woman's life completer;**

**' A latent fire of soul which lacks  
No breath of love to fan it;  
And wit, that, like his native brooks,  
Plays over solid granite. 440**

**' How dwarfed against his manliness  
She sees the poor pretension,**

**The wants, the aims, the follies, born  
Of fashion and convention !**

**' How life behind its accidents  
Stands strong and self-sustaining,  
The human fact transcending all  
The losing and the gaining.**

**' And so in grateful interchange  
Of teacher and of hearer, 450  
Their lives their true distinctness keep  
While daily drawing nearer.**

**' And if the husband or the wife  
In home's strong light discovers  
Such slight defaults as failed to meet  
The blinded eyes of lovers,**

**' Why need we care to ask ? — who dreams  
Without their thorns of roses,  
Or wonders that the truest steel  
The readiest spark discloses ? 460**

**' For still in mutual sufferance lies  
The secret of true living;  
Love scarce is love that never knows  
The sweetness of forgiving.**

**' We send the Squire to General Court,  
He takes his young wife thither;  
No prouder man election day  
Rides through the sweet June weather.**

**' He sees with eyes of manly trust  
All hearts to her inclining; 470  
Not less for him his household light  
That others share its shining.'**

**Thus, while my hostess spake, there grew  
Before me, warmer tinted  
And outlined with a tenderer grace,  
The picture that she hinted.**

**The sunset smouldered as we drove  
Beneath the deep hill-shadows.  
Below us wreaths of white fog walked  
Like ghosts the haunted meadows. 480**

**Sounding the summer night, the stars  
Dropped down their golden plummets;  
The pale arc of the Northern lights  
Rose o'er the mountain summits,**

**Until, at last, beneath its bridge,  
We heard the Bearcamp flowing,**

And saw across the mapled lawn  
The welcome home-lights glowing.

And, musing on the tale I heard,  
'T were well, thought I, if often 490  
To rugged farm-life came the gift  
To harmonize and soften;

If more and more we found the troth  
Of fact and fancy plighted,  
And culture's charm and labor's strength  
In rural homes united, —

The simple life, the homely hearth,  
With beauty's sphere surrounding,  
And blessing toil where toil abounds  
With graces more abounding. 500  
1867-1868. 1868.

### MARGUERITE <sup>1</sup>

THE robins sang in the orchard, the buds  
into blossoms grew;  
Little of human sorrow the buds and the  
robins knew!

Sick, in an alien household, the poor French  
neutral lay;  
Into her lonesome garret fell the light of  
the April day,

Through the dusty window, curtained by  
the spider's warp and woof,  
On the loose-laid floor of hemlock, on oaken  
ribs of roof,

The bedquilt's faded patchwork, the tea-  
cups on the stand,  
The wheel with flaxen tangle, as it dropped  
from her sick hand!

What to her was the song of the robin, or  
warm morning light,  
As she lay in the trance of the dying, heed-  
less of sound or sight? 510

<sup>1</sup> See the note on Longfellow's 'Evangeline,' p. 121. Whittier wrote to Mrs. Fields in November, 1870: 'You know that a thousand of the Acadians were distributed among the towns of Massachusetts, where they were mostly treated as paupers.' In the letter already quoted in the note on Evangeline, he says: 'The children were bound out to the families in the localities in which they resided; and I wrote a poem upon finding, in the records of Haverhill, the indenture that bound an Acadian girl as a servant in one of the families of that neighborhood. Gathering the story of her death, I wrote "Marguerite."'

Done was the work of her hands, she had  
eaten her bitter bread;  
The world of the alien people lay behind  
her dim and dead.

But her soul went back to its child-time;  
she saw the sun o'erflow  
With gold the Basin of Minas, and set over  
Gaspereau;

The low, bare flats at ebb-tide, the rush of  
the sea at flood,  
Through inlet and creek and river, from  
dike to upland wood;

The gulls in the red of morning, the fish-  
hawk's rise and fall,  
The drift of the fog in moonshine, over the  
dark coast-wall.

She saw the face of her mother, she heard  
the song she sang;  
And far off, faintly, slowly, the bell for  
vespers rang! 520

By her bed the hard-faced mistress sat,  
smoothing the wrinkled sheet,  
Peering into the face, so helpless, and feel-  
ing the ice-cold feet.

With a vague remorse atoning for her greed  
and long abuse,  
By care no longer heeded and pity too late  
for use.

Up the stairs of the garret softly the son of  
the mistress stepped,  
Leaned over the head-board, covering his  
face with his hands, and wept.

Outspoke the mother, who watched him  
sharply, with brow a-frown:  
'What! love you the Papist, the beggar,  
the charge of the town?'

'Be she Papist or beggar who lies here, I  
know and God knows  
I love her, and fain would go with her  
wherever she goes! 530

'O mother! that sweet face came pleading,  
for love so athirst.  
You saw but the town-charge; I knew her  
God's angel at first.'

Shaking her gray head, the mistress hushed  
down a bitter cry;  
And awed by the silence and shadow of  
death drawing nigh,

She murmured a psalm of the Bible; but  
closer the young girl pressed,  
With the last of her life in her fingers, the  
cross to her breast.

'My son, come away,' cried the mother,  
her voice cruel grown.  
'She is joined to her idols, like Ephraim;  
let her alone!'

But he knelt with his hand on her forehead,  
his lips to her ear,  
And he called back the soul that was pass-  
ing: 'Marguerite, do you hear?' 40

She paused on the threshold of heaven;  
love, pity, surprise,  
Wistful, tender, lit up for an instant the  
cloud of her eyes.

With his heart on his lips he kissed her,  
but never her cheek grew red,  
And the words the living long for he spake  
in the ear of the dead.

And the robins sang in the orchard, where  
buds to blossoms grew;  
Of the folded hands and the still face never  
the robins knew!

1869.

1871.

IN SCHOOL-DAYS<sup>1</sup>

STILL sits the school-house by the road,  
A ragged beggar sleeping;  
Around it still the sumachs grow,  
And blackberry-vines are creeping.

Within, the master's desk is seen,  
Deep scarred by raps official;  
The warping floor, the battered seats,  
The jack-knife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall;  
Its door's worn sill, betraying 10

<sup>1</sup> See Pickard's *Whittier-Land*, pp. 32, 33. For Longfellow's comment on the poem, see Samuel Longfellow's *Life of H. W. Longfellow*, vol. iii, p. 287; and for Holmes's, Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. ii, pp. 641, 642. 'You have written,' said Holmes to Whittier, 'the most beautiful school-boy poem in the English language.'

The feet that, creeping slow to school,  
Went storming out to playing!

Long years ago a winter sun  
Shone over it at setting;  
Lit up its western window-panes,  
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,  
And brown eyes full of grieving,  
Of one who still her steps delayed  
When all the school were leaving. 20

For near her stood the little boy  
Her childish favor singled:  
His cap pulled low upon a face  
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow  
To right and left, he lingered;—  
As restlessly her tiny hands  
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt  
The soft hand's light caressing, 30  
And heard the tremble of her voice,  
As if a fault confessing.

'I'm sorry that I spelt the word:  
I hate to go above you,  
Because,'—the brown eyes lower fell,—  
'Because, you see, I love you!'

Still memory to a gray-haired man  
That sweet child-face is showing.  
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave  
Have forty years been growing! 40

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,  
How few who pass above him  
Lament their triumph and his loss,  
Like her,—because they love him.

1869.

1870.

## MY TRIUMPH

THE autumn-time has come;  
On woods that dream of bloom,  
And over purpling vines  
The low sun fainter shines.

The aster-flower is failing,  
The hazel's gold is paling;  
Yet overhead more near  
The eternal stars appear!

And present gratitude  
Insures the future's good,  
And for the things I see,  
I trust the things to be; 10

That in the paths untrod,  
And the long days of God,  
My feet shall still be led,  
My heart be comforted.

O living friends who love me !  
O dear ones gone above me !  
Careless of other fame,  
I leave to you my name. 20

Hide it from idle praises,  
Save it from evil phrases:  
Why, when dear lips that spake it  
Are dumb, should strangers wake  
it ?

Let the thick curtain fall;  
I better know than all  
How little I have gained,  
How vast the unattained.

Not by the page word-painted  
Let life be banned or sainted:  
Deeper than written scroll  
The colors of the soul. 30

Sweeter than any sung  
My songs that found no tongue;  
Nobler than any fact  
My wish that failed of act.

Others shall sing the song,  
Others shall right the wrong, —  
Finish what I begin,  
And all I fail of win. 40

What matter, I or they ?  
Mine or another's day,  
So the right word be said  
And life the sweeter made ?

Hail to the coming singers !  
Hail to the brave light-bringers !  
Forward I reach and share  
All that they sing and dare.

The airs of heaven blow o'er me;  
A glory shines before me  
Of what mankind shall be, —  
Pure, generous, brave, and free. 50

A dream of man and woman  
Diviner but still human,  
Solving the riddle old,  
Shaping the Age of Gold !

The love of God and neighbor;  
An equal-handed labor;  
The richer life, where beauty  
Walks hand in hand with duty. 60

Ring, bells in unrequited steeples,  
The joy of unborn peoples !  
Sound, trumpets far off blown,  
Your triumph is my own !

Parcel and part of all,  
I keep the festival,  
Fore-reach the good to be,  
And share the victory.

I feel the earth move sunward,  
I join the great march onward,  
And take, by faith, while living,  
My freehold of thanksgiving. 70

1870?

### MY BIRTHDAY

BENEATH the moonlight and the snow  
Lies dead my latest year;  
The winter winds are wailing low  
Its dirges in my ear.

I grieve not with the moaning wind  
As if a loss befell;  
Before me, even as behind,  
God is, and all is well !

His light shines on me from above,  
His low voice speaks within, —  
The patience of immortal love  
Outwearying mortal sin. 80

Not mindless of the growing years  
Of care and loss and pain,  
My eyes are wet with thankful tears  
For blessings which remain.

If dim the gold of life has grown,  
I will not count it dross,  
Nor turn from treasures still my own  
To sigh for lack and loss. 90

The years no charm from Nature take;  
As sweet her voices call,

As beautiful her mornings break,  
As fair her evenings fall.

Love watches o'er my quiet ways,  
Kind voices speak my name,  
And lips that find it hard to praise  
Are slow, at least, to blame.

How softly ebb the tides of will !  
How fields, once lost or won,  
Now lie behind me green and still  
Beneath a level sun !

How hushed the hiss of party hate,  
The clamor of the throng !  
How old, harsh voices of debate  
Flow into rhythmic song !

Methinks the spirit's temper grows  
Too soft in this still air;  
Somewhat the restful heart foregoes  
Of needed watch and prayer.

The bark by tempest vainly tossed  
May founder in the calm,  
And he who braved the polar frost  
Faint by the isles of balm.

Better than self-indulgent years  
The outflung heart of youth,  
Than pleasant songs in idle ears  
The tumult of the truth.

Rest for the weary hands is good,  
And love for hearts that pine,  
But let the manly habitude  
Of upright souls be mine.

Let winds that blow from heaven re-  
fresh,  
Dear Lord, the languid air;  
And let the weakness of the flesh  
Thy strength of spirit share.

And, if the eye must fail of light,  
The ear forget to hear,  
Make clearer still the spirit's sight,  
More fine the inward ear !

Be near me in mine hours of need  
To soothe, or cheer, or warn,  
And down these slopes of sunset lead  
As up the hills of morn !

1871.

## THE SISTERS

ANNIE and Rhoda, sisters twain,  
Woke in the night to the sound of rain,

The rush of wind, the ramp and roar  
Of great waves climbing a rocky shore.

Annie rose up in her bed-gown white,  
And looked out into the storm and night.

'Hush, and hearken !' she cried in fear,  
'Hearest thou nothing, sister dear ?'

'I hear the sea, and the plash of rain,  
And roar of the northeast hurricane.

'Get thee back to the bed so warm,  
No good comes of watching a storm.

'What is it to thee, I fain would know,  
That waves are roaring and wild winds  
blow ?

'No lover of thine's afloat to miss  
The harbor-lights on a night like this.'

'But I heard a voice cry out my name,  
Up from the sea on the wind it came !

'Twice and thrice have I heard it call,  
And the voice is the voice of Estwick  
Hall !'

On her pillow the sister tossed her head.  
'Hall of the Heron is safe,' she said.

'In the tautest schooner that ever swam  
He rides at anchor in Annisquam.

'And, if in peril from swamping sea  
Or lee shore rocks, would he call on thee ?'

But the girl heard only the wind and tide,  
And wringing her small white hands she  
cried:

'O sister Rhoda, there's something wrong;  
I hear it again, so loud and long.

'“Annie ! Annie !” I hear it call,  
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall !'

Up sprang the elder, with eyes aflame,  
'Thou liest ! He never would call thy name !



'If he did, I would pray the wind and sea  
To keep him forever from thee and me!'

Then out of the sea blew a dreadful blast;  
Like the cry of a dying man it passed.

The young girl hushed on her lips a groan,  
But through her tears a strange light  
shone, — 40

The solemn joy of her heart's release  
To own and cherish its love in peace.

'Dearest!' she whispered, under breath,  
'Life was a lie, but true is death.

'The love I hid from myself away  
Shall crown me now in the light of day.

'My ears shall never to wooer list,  
Never by lover my lips be kissed.

'Sacred to thee am I henceforth,  
Thou in heaven and I on earth!' 50

She came and stood by her sister's bed:  
'Hall of the Heron is dead!' she said.

'The wind and the waves their work have  
done,  
We shall see him no more beneath the sun.

'Little will reck that heart of thine;  
It loved him not with a love like mine.

'I, for his sake, were he but here,  
Could hem and 'broider thy bridal gear,

'Though hands should tremble and eyes  
be wet,  
And stitch for stitch in my heart be set. 60

'But now my soul with his soul I wed;  
Thine the living, and mine the dead!'

1871.

### THE THREE BELLS

BENEATH the low-hung night cloud  
That raked her splintering mast  
The good ship settled slowly,  
The cruel leak gained fast.

Over the awful ocean  
Her signal guns pealed out.

Dear God! was that thy answer  
From the horror round about?

A voice came down the wild wind,  
'Ho! ship ahoy!' its cry:  
'Our stout Three Bells of Glasgow  
Shall lay till daylight by!'

Hour after hour crept slowly,  
Yet on the heaving swells  
Tossed up and down the ship-lights,  
The lights of the Three Bells!

And ship to ship made signals,  
Man answered back to man,  
While oft, to cheer and hearten,  
The Three Bells nearer ran; 20

And the captain from her taffrail  
Sent down his hopeful cry:  
'Take heart! Hold on!' he shouted!  
'The Three Bells shall lay by!'

All night across the waters  
The tossing lights shone clear;  
All night from reeling taffrail  
The Three Bells sent her cheer.

And when the dreary watches  
Of storm and darkness passed, 30  
Just as the wreck lurched under,  
All souls were saved at last.

Sail on, Three Bells, forever,  
In grateful memory sail!  
Ring on, Three Bells of rescue,  
Above the wave and gale!

Type of the Love eternal,  
Repeat the Master's cry,  
As tossing through our darkness  
The lights of God draw nigh! 40

1872

### CONDUCTOR BRADLEY<sup>1</sup>

CONDUCTOR BRADLEY (always may his  
name  
Be said with reverence!), as the swift doom  
came,  
Smitten to death, a crushed and mangled  
frame,

<sup>1</sup> A railway conductor who lost his life in an accident  
on a Connecticut railway, May 9, 1873. (WHITTIER.)

ank, with the brake he grasped just where  
he stood

To do the utmost that a brave man could,  
And die, if needful, as a true man should.

Men stooped above him; women dropped  
their tears

On that poor wreck beyond all hopes or  
fears,

Lost in the strength and glory of his years.

What heard they? Lo! the ghastly lips  
of pain,

Dead to all thought save duty's, moved  
again:

'Put out the signals for the other train!'

No nobler utterance since the world be-  
gan

From lips of saint or martyr ever ran,  
Electric, through the sympathies of man.

Ah me! how poor and noteless seem to  
this

The sick-bed dramas of self-conscious-  
ness,

Our sensual fears of pain and hopes of  
bliss!

Oh, grand, supreme endeavor! Not in  
vain

That last brave act of failing tongue and  
brain!

Freighted with life the downward rushing  
train,

Following the wrecked one, as wave follows  
wave,

Obedied the warning which the dead lips  
gave.

Others he saved, himself he could not  
save.

Nay, the lost life *was* saved. He is not  
dead

Who in his record still the earth shall  
tread

With God's clear aureole shining round  
his head.

We bow as in the dust, with all our pride  
Of virtue dwarfed the noble deed beside.

God give us grace to live as Bradley  
died!

1873.

1873.

A MYSTERY<sup>1</sup>

THE river hemmed with leaning trees  
Wound through its meadows green;  
A low, blue line of mountains showed  
The open pines between.

One sharp, tall peak above them all  
Clear into sunlight sprang:  
I saw the river of my dreams,  
The mountains that I sang!

No clew of memory led me on,  
But well the ways I knew;  
A feeling of familiar things  
With every footstep grew.

Not otherwise above its crag  
Could lean the blasted pine;  
Not otherwise the maple hold  
Aloft its red ensign.

So up the long and shorn foot-hills  
The mountain road should creep;  
So, green and low, the meadow fold  
Its red-haired kine asleep.

The river wound as it should wind;  
Their place the mountains took;  
The white torn fringes of their clouds  
Wore no unwonted look.

Yet ne'er before that river's rim  
Was pressed by feet of mine,  
Never before mine eyes had crossed  
That broken mountain line.

A presence, strange at once and known,  
Walked with me as my guide;  
The skirts of some forgotten life  
Trailed noiseless at my side.

Was it a dim-remembered dream?  
Or glimpse through æons old?  
The secret which the mountains kept  
The river never told.

But from the vision ere it passed  
A tender hope I drew,  
And, pleasant as a dawn of spring,  
The thought within me grew,

That love would temper every change,  
And soften all surprise,

<sup>1</sup> Compare Lowell's 'In the Twilight.'

And, misty with the dreams of earth,  
The hills of Heaven arise.

1873.

### THE PRAYER OF AGASSIZ<sup>1</sup>

On the isle of Penikese,  
Ringed about by sapphire seas,  
Fanned by breezes salt and cool,  
Stood the Master with his school.  
Over sails that not in vain  
Wooded the west-wind's steady strain,  
Line of coast that low and far  
Stretched its undulating bar,  
Wings aslant across the rim  
Of the waves they stooped to skim, 10  
Rock and isle and glistening bay,  
Fell the beautiful white day.

Said the Master to the youth:  
'We have come in search of truth,  
Trying with uncertain key  
Door by door of mystery;  
We are reaching, through his laws,  
To the garment-hem of Cause,  
Him, the endless, unbegun,  
The Unnamable, the One 20  
Light of all our light the Source,  
Life of life, and Force of force.

As with fingers of the blind,  
We are groping here to find  
What the hieroglyphics mean  
Of the Unseen in the seen,  
What the Thought which underlies  
Nature's masking and disguise,  
What it is that hides beneath  
Blight and bloom and birth and death. 30  
By past efforts unavailing,  
Doubt and error, loss and failing,  
Of our weakness made aware,

<sup>1</sup> The island of Penikese in Buzzard's Bay was given by Mr. John Anderson to Agassiz for the uses of a summer school of natural history. A large barn was cleared and improvised as a lecture-room. Here, on the first morning of the school, all the company was gathered. 'Agassiz had arranged no programme of exercises,' says Mrs. Agassiz, in *Louis Agassiz; his Life and Correspondence*, 'trusting to the interest of the occasion to suggest what might best be said or done. But, as he looked upon his pupils gathered there to study nature with him, by an impulse as natural as it was unpremeditated, he called upon them to join in silently asking God's blessing on their work together. The pause was broken by the first words of an address no less fervent than its unspoken prelude.' This was in the summer of 1873, and Agassiz died the December following. (WHITTIER.)

On the threshold of our task  
Let us light and guidance ask,  
Let us pause in silent prayer !'

Then the Master in his place  
Bowed his head a little space,  
And the leaves by soft airs stirred,  
Lapse of wave and cry of bird,  
Left the solemn hush unbroken  
Of that wordless prayer unspoken,  
While its wish, on earth unsaid,  
Rose to heaven interpreted.  
As, in life's best hours, we hear  
By the spirit's finer ear  
His low voice within us, thus  
The All-Father heareth us;  
And his holy ear we pain  
With our noisy words and vain. 5  
Not for Him our violence  
Storming at the gates of sense,  
His the primal language, his  
The eternal silences !

Even the careless heart was moved,  
And the doubting gave assent,  
With a gesture reverent,  
To the Master well-beloved.  
As thin mists are glorified  
By the light they cannot hide, 6  
All who gazed upon him saw,  
Through its veil of tender awe,  
How his face was still uplit  
By the old sweet look of it,  
Hopeful, trustful, full of cheer,  
And the love that casts out fear.  
Who the secret may declare  
Of that brief, unuttered prayer ?  
Did the shade before him come  
Of th' inevitable doom, 7  
Of the end of earth so near,  
And Eternity's new year ?

In the lap of sheltering seas  
Rests the isle of Penikese ;  
But the lord of the domain  
Comes not to his own again:  
Where the eyes that follow fail,  
On a vaster sea his sail  
Drifts beyond our beck and hail. 8  
Other lips within its bound  
Shall the laws of life expound;  
Other eyes from rock and shell  
Read the world's old riddles well:  
But when breezes light and bland  
Blow from Summer's blossomed land,

When the air is glad with wings,  
 And the blithe song-sparrow sings,  
 Many an eye with his still face  
 Shall the living ones displace,  
 Many an ear the word shall seek 90  
 He alone could fitly speak.  
 And one name forevermore  
 Shall be uttered o'er and o'er  
 By the waves that kiss the shore,  
 By the curlew's whistle sent  
 Down the cool, sea-scented air;  
 In all voices known to her,  
 Nature owns her worshipper,  
 Half in triumph, half lament.  
 Thither Love shall tearful turn, 100  
 Friendship pause uncovered there,  
 And the wisest reverence learn  
 From the Master's silent prayer.

1874.

A SEA DREAM<sup>1</sup>

We saw the slow tides go and come,  
 The curving surf-lines lightly drawn,  
 The gray rocks touched with tender  
 bloom  
 Beneath the fresh-blown rose of dawn.

We saw in richer sunsets lost  
 The sombre pomp of showery noons;  
 And signalled spectral sails that crossed  
 The weird, low light of rising moons.

On stormy eves from cliff and head  
 We saw the white spray tossed and  
 spurned; 10  
 While over all, in gold and red,  
 Its face of fire the lighthouse turned.

The rail-car brought its daily crowds,  
 Half curious, half indifferent,  
 Like passing sails or floating clouds,  
 We saw them as they came and went.

But, one calm morning, as we lay  
 And watched the mirage-lifted wall  
 Of coast, across the dreamy bay,  
 And heard afar the curlew call, 20

And nearer voices, wild or tame,  
 Of airy flock and childish throng,  
 Up from the water's edge there came  
 Faint snatches of familiar song.

<sup>1</sup> See Pickard's *Whittier-Land*, pp. 67-72.

Careless we heard the singer's choice  
 Of old and common airs; at last  
 The tender pathos of his voice  
 In one low chanson held us fast.

A song that mingled joy and pain,  
 And memories old and sadly sweet; 30  
 While, timing to its minor strain,  
 The waves in lapsing cadence beat.

The waves are glad in breeze and sun;  
 The rocks are fringed with foam;  
 I walk once more a haunted shore,  
 A stranger, yet at home,  
 A land of dreams I roam.

Is this the wind, the soft sea-wind  
 That stirred thy locks of brown?  
 Are these the rocks whose mosses knew  
 The trail of thy light gown, 40  
 Where boy and girl sat down?

I see the gray fort's broken wall,  
 The boats that rock below;  
 And, out at sea, the passing sails  
 We saw so long ago  
 Rose-red in morning's glow.

The freshness of the early time  
 On every breeze is blown;  
 As glad the sea, as blue the sky, — 50  
 The change is ours alone;  
 The saddest is my own.

A stranger now, a world-worn man,  
 Is he who bears my name;  
 But thou, methinks, whose mortal life  
 Immortal youth became,  
 Art evermore the same.

Thou art not here, thou art not there,  
 Thy place I cannot see;  
 I only know that where thou art 60  
 The blessed angels be,  
 And heaven is glad for thee.

Forgive me if the evil years  
 Have left on me their sign;  
 Wash out, O soul so beautiful,  
 The many stains of mine  
 In tears of love divine!

<sup>1</sup> The place that was in the mind of the poet when he wrote this stanza was on the rocks at Marblehead, where he had spent an early morning more than forty years before. (*Cambridge Edition of Whittier's Poems*.)

I could not look on thee and live,  
 If thou wert by my side;  
 The vision of a shining one,  
 The white and heavenly bride,  
 Is well to me denied. 70

But turn to me thy dear girl-face  
 Without the angel's crown,  
 The wedded roses of thy lips,  
 Thy loose hair rippling down  
 In waves of golden brown.

Look forth once more through space and  
 time,  
 And let thy sweet shade fall  
 In tenderest grace of soul and form 80  
 On memory's frescoed wall,  
 A shadow, and yet all!

Draw near, more near, forever dear!  
 Where'er I rest or roam,  
 Or in the city's crowded streets,  
 Or by the blown sea foam,  
 The thought of thee is home!

At breakfast hour the singer read  
 The city news, with comment wise,  
 Like one who felt the pulse of trade 90  
 Beneath his finger fall and rise.

His look, his air, his curt speech, told  
 The man of action, not of books,  
 To whom the corners made in gold  
 And stocks were more than seaside  
 nooks.

Of life beneath the life confessed  
 His song had hinted unawares;  
 Of flowers in traffic's ledgers pressed,  
 Of human hearts in bulls and bears.

But eyes in vain were turned to watch 100  
 That face so hard and shrewd and strong;  
 And ears in vain grew sharp to catch  
 The meaning of that morning song.

In vain some sweet-voiced querist sought  
 To sound him, leaving as she came;  
 Her baited album only caught  
 A common, unromantic name.

No word betrayed the mystery fine,  
 That trembled on the singer's tongue;

He came and went, and left no sign 110  
 Behind him save the song he sung.  
 1874.

### SUNSET ON THE BEARCAMP

A GOLD fringe on the purpling hem  
 Of hills the river runs,  
 As down its long, green valley falls  
 The last of summer's suns.  
 Along its tawny gravel-bed  
 Broad-flowing, swift, and still,  
 As if its meadow levels felt  
 The hurry of the hill,  
 Noiseless between its banks of green  
 From curve to curve it slips; 120  
 The drowsy maple-shadows rest  
 Like fingers on its lips.

A waif from Carroll's wildest hills,  
 Unstoried and unknown;  
 The ursine legend of its name  
 Prowls on its banks alone.  
 Yet flowers as fair its slopes adorn  
 As ever Yarrow knew,  
 Or, under rainy Irish skies,  
 By Spenser's Mulla grew; 130  
 And through the gaps of leaning trees  
 Its mountain cradle shows:  
 The gold against the amethyst,  
 The green against the rose.

Touched by a light that hath no name,  
 A glory never sung,  
 Aloft on sky and mountain wall  
 Are God's great pictures hung.  
 How changed the summits vast and old! 140  
 No longer granite-browed,  
 They melt in rosy mist; the rock  
 Is softer than the cloud;  
 The valley holds its breath; no leaf  
 Of all its elms is twirled:  
 The silence of eternity  
 Seems falling on the world.

The pause before the breaking seals  
 Of mystery is this;  
 Yon miracle-play of night and day  
 Makes dumb its witnesses. 150  
 What unseen altar crowns the hills  
 That reach up stair on stair?  
 What eyes look through, what white wings  
 fan  
 These purple veils of air?

What Presence from the heavenly heights  
To those of earth stoops down?  
Not vainly Hellas dreamed of gods  
On Ida's snowy crown!

Slow fades the vision of the sky,  
The golden water pales, 50  
And over all the valley-land  
A gray-winged vapor sails.  
I go the common way of all;  
The sunset fires will burn,  
The flowers will blow, the river flow,  
When I no more return.  
No whisper from the mountain pine  
Nor lapsing stream shall tell  
The stranger, treading where I tread, 60  
Of him who loved them well.

But beauty seen is never lost,  
God's colors all are fast;  
The glory of this sunset heaven  
Into my soul has passed,  
A sense of gladness unconfined  
To mortal date or clime;  
As the soul liveth, it shall live  
Beyond the years of time.  
Beside the mystic asphodels  
Shall bloom the home-born flowers, 70  
And new horizons flush and glow  
With sunset hues of ours.

Farewell! these smiling hills must wear  
Too soon their wintry frown,  
And snow-cold winds from off them  
shake  
The maple's red leaves down.  
But I shall see a summer sun  
Still setting broad and low;  
The mountain slopes shall blush and bloom,  
The golden water flow. 80  
A lover's claim is mine on all  
I see to have and hold, —  
The rose-light of perpetual hills,  
And sunsets never cold!

1875.

1876.

## LEXINGTON

1775

No Berserk thirst of blood had they,  
No battle-joy was theirs, who set  
Against the alien bayonet  
Their homespun breasts in that old day.

Their feet had trodden peaceful ways;  
They loved not strife, they dreaded  
pain;  
They saw not, what to us is plain,  
That God would make man's wrath his  
praise.

No seers were they, but simple men;  
Its vast results the future hid: 10  
The meaning of the work they did  
Was strange and dark and doubtful then.

Swift as their summons came they left  
The plough mid-furrow standing still,  
The half-ground corn grist in the  
mill,  
The spade in earth, the axe in cleft.

They went where duty seemed to call,  
They scarcely asked the reason why;  
They only knew they could but die,  
And death was not the worst of all! 20

Of man for man the sacrifice,  
All that was theirs to give, they gave.  
The flowers that blossomed from their  
grave  
Have sown themselves beneath all skies.

Their death-shot shook the feudal tower,  
And shattered slavery's chain as well;  
On the sky's dome, as on a bell,  
Its echo struck the world's great hour.

That fateful echo is not dumb:  
The nations listening to its sound 30  
Wait, from a century's vantage-ground,  
The holier triumphs yet to come, —

The bridal time of Law and Love,  
The gladness of the world's release,  
When, war-sick, at the feet of Peace  
The hawk shall nestle with the dove! —

The golden age of brotherhood  
Unknown to other rivalries  
Than of the mild humanities,  
And gracious interchange of good, 40

When closer strand shall lean to strand,  
Till meet, beneath saluting flags,  
The eagle of our mountain-crag,  
The lion of our Motherland!

1875.

1875.

CENTENNIAL HYMN<sup>1</sup>

## I

OUR fathers' God ! from out whose hand  
The centuries fall like grains of sand,  
We meet to-day, united, free,  
And loyal to our land and Thee,  
To thank Thee for the era done,  
And trust Thee for the opening one.

## II

Here, where of old, by thy design,  
The fathers spake that word of thine  
Whose echo is the glad refrain  
Of rended bolt and falling chain,  
To grace our festal time, from all  
The zones of earth our guests we call.

## III

Be with us while the New World greets  
The Old World thronging all its streets,  
Unveiling all the triumphs won  
By art or toil beneath the sun;  
And unto common good ordain  
This rivalry of hand and brain.

## IV

Thou, who hast here in concord furled  
The war flags of a gathered world,  
Beneath our Western skies fulfil  
The Orient's mission of good-will,  
And, freighted with love's Golden Fleece,  
Send back its Argonauts of peace.

## V

For art and labor met in truce,  
For beauty made the bride of use,  
We thank Thee; but, withal, we crave  
The austere virtues strong to save,  
The honor proof to place or gold,  
The manhood never bought nor sold !

## VI

Oh make Thou us, through centuries  
long,  
In peace secure, in justice strong;  
Around our gift of freedom draw  
The safeguards of thy righteous law:  
And, cast in some diviner mould,  
Let the new cycle shame the old !  
1876. 1876.

<sup>1</sup> Written for the opening of the International Exhibition, Philadelphia, May 10, 1876. The music for the hymn was written by John K. Paine, and may be found in *The Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1876.

(WHITTIER.)

## THE PROBLEM

## I

NOR without envy Wealth at times must  
look  
On their brown strength who wield the  
reaping-hook  
And scythe, or at the forge-fire shape  
the plough  
Or the steel harness of the steeds of steam;  
All who, by skill and patience, anyhow  
Make service noble, and the earth redeem  
From savageness. By kingly accolade  
Than theirs was never worthier knighthood  
made.  
Well for them, if, while demagogues their  
vain  
And evil counsels proffer, they maintain  
Their honest manhood unseduced, and  
wage  
No war with Labor's right to Labor's gain  
Of sweet home-comfort, rest of hand and  
brain,  
And softer pillow for the head of Age.

## II

And well for Gain if it ungrudging yields  
Labor its just demand; and well for  
Ease  
If in the uses of its own, it sees  
No wrong to him who tills its pleasant  
fields  
And spreads the table of its luxuries.  
The interests of the rich man and the poor  
Are one and same, inseparable evermore;  
And, when scant wage or labor fail to give  
Food, shelter, raiment, wherewithal to live,  
Need has its rights, necessity its claim.  
Yea, even self-wrought misery and shame  
Test well the charity suffering long and  
kind.  
The home-pressed question of the age can  
find  
No answer in the catch-words of the blind  
Leaders of blind. Solution there is none  
Save in the Golden Rule of Christ alone.  
1876 ? (1878.)

RESPONSE<sup>2</sup>

BESIDE that milestone where the level sun,  
Nigh unto setting, sheds his last, low rays

<sup>2</sup> Written in response to the many tokens of esteem which Whittier received on his seventieth birthday.



On word and work irrevocably done,  
 Life's blending threads of good and ill out-  
   spun,  
 I hear, O friends! your words of cheer and  
   praise,  
 Half doubtful if myself or otherwise.  
 Like him who, in the old Arabian joke,  
 A beggar slept and crowned Caliph woke.  
 Thanks not the less. With not unglad sur-  
   prise  
 I see my life-work through your partial  
   eyes;  
 Assured, in giving to my home-taught  
   songs  
 A higher value than of right belongs,  
 You do but read between the written  
   lines  
 The finer grace of unfulfilled designs.  
 1877. 1877.

## AT EVENTIDE

Poor and inadequate the shadow-play  
 Of gain and loss, of waking and of  
   dream,  
 Against life's solemn background needs  
   must seem  
 At this late hour. Yet, not unthankfully,  
 I call to mind the fountains by the way,  
 The breath of flowers, the bird-song on the  
   spray,  
 Dear friends, sweet human loves, the joy  
   of giving  
 And of receiving, the great boon of liv-  
   ing  
 In grand historic years when Liberty  
 Had need of word and work, quick sympa-  
   thies  
 For all who fail and suffer, song's relief,  
 Nature's uncloying loveliness; and chief,  
 The kind restraining hand of Provi-  
   dence,  
 The inward witness, the assuring sense  
 Of an Eternal Good which overlies  
 The sorrow of the world, Love which out-  
   lives  
 All sin and wrong, Compassion which for-  
   gives  
 To the uttermost, and Justice whose clear  
   eyes  
 Through lapse and failure look to the in-  
   tent,  
 And judge our frailty by the life we meant.  
 1878.

## THE TRAILING ARBUTUS

I WANDERED lonely where the pine-trees  
   made  
 Against the bitter East their barricade,  
 And, guided by its sweet  
 Perfume, I found, within a narrow dell,  
 The trailing spring flower tinted like a  
   shell  
 Amid dry leaves and mosses at my feet.  
 From under dead boughs, for whose loss  
   the pines  
 Moaned ceaseless overhead, the blossoming  
   vines  
 Lifted their glad surprise,  
 While yet the bluebird smoothed in leafless  
   trees  
 His feathers ruffled by the chill sea-breeze,  
 And snow-drifts lingered under April  
   skies.

As, pausing, o'er the lonely flower I bent,  
 I thought of lives thus lowly, clogged and  
   pent,  
 Which yet find room,  
 Through care and cumber, coldness and  
   decay,  
 To lend a sweetness to the ungenial day,  
 And make the sad earth happier for their  
   bloom.

1879?

OUR AUTOCRAT<sup>1</sup>

His laurels fresh from song and lay,  
 Romance, art, science, rich in all,  
 And young of heart, how dare we say  
 We keep his seventieth festival?

No sense is here of loss or lack;  
 Before his sweetness and his light  
 The dial holds its shadow back,  
 The charmed hours delay their flight.

His still the keen analysis  
 Of men and moods, electric wit, 10  
 Free play of mirth, and tenderness  
 To heal the slightest wound from it.

And his the pathos touching all  
 Life's sins and sorrows and regrets,

<sup>1</sup> Read at the breakfast given in honor of Holmes's seventieth birthday.

Its hopes and fears, its final call  
And rest beneath the violets.

His sparkling surface scarce betrays  
The thoughtful tide beneath it rolled,  
The wisdom of the latter days,  
And tender memories of the old. 20

What shapes and fancies, grave or gay,  
Before us at his bidding come!  
The Treadmill tramp, the One-Horse  
Shay,  
The dumb despair of Elsie's doom!

The tale of Avis and the Maid,  
The plea for lips that cannot speak,  
The holy kiss that Iris laid  
On Little Boston's pallid cheek!

Long may he live to sing for us  
His sweetest songs at evening time, 30  
And, like his Chambered Nautilus,  
To holier heights of beauty climb!

Though now unnumbered guests surround  
The table that he rules at will,  
Its Autocrat, however crowned,  
Is but our friend and comrade still.

The world may keep his honored name,  
The wealth of all his varied powers;  
A stronger claim has love than fame,  
And he himself is only ours! 40  
1879. 1879.

### GARRISON<sup>1</sup>

THE storm and peril overpast,  
The hounding hatred shamed and still,  
Go, soul of freedom! take at last  
The place which thou alone canst fill.

Confirm the lesson taught of old —  
Life saved for self is lost, while they  
Who lose it in his service hold  
The lease of God's eternal day.

Not for thyself, but for the slave  
Thy words of thunder shook the world; 10

<sup>1</sup> My poetical service in the cause of freedom is almost synchronous with his life of devotion to the same cause. (WHITTIER.)

See Pickard's *Life of Whittier*, vol. ii, p. 668; and the article on Garrison in Whittier's *Prose Works*, vol. iii, pp. 189-192.

No selfish griefs or hatred gave  
The strength wherewith thy bolts were  
hurled.

From lips that Sinai's trumpet blew  
We heard a tender under song;  
Thy very wrath from pity grew,  
From love of man thy hate of wrong.

Now past and present are as one;  
The life below is life above;  
Thy mortal years have but begun  
Thy immortality of love. 20

With somewhat of thy lofty faith  
We lay the outworn garment by,  
Give death but what belongs to death,  
And life the life that cannot die!

Not for a soul like thine the calm  
Of selfish ease and joys of sense;  
But duty, more than crown or palm,  
Its own exceeding recompense.

Go up and on! thy day well done,  
Its morning promise well fulfilled, 30  
Arise to triumphs yet unwon,  
To holier tasks that God has willed.

Go, leave behind thee all that mars  
The work below of man for man;  
With the white legions of the stars  
Do service such as angels can.

Wherever wrong shall right deny  
Or suffering spirits urge their plea,  
Be thine a voice to smite the lie,  
A hand to set the captive free! 40  
1879. 1879.

### THE LOST OCCASION<sup>2</sup>

SOME die too late and some too soon,  
At early morning, heat of noon,  
Or the chill evening twilight. Thou,  
Whom the rich heavens did so endow  
With eyes of power and Jove's own brow,  
With all the massive strength that fills  
Thy home-horizon's granite hills,  
With rarest gifts of heart and head  
From manliest stock inherited,  
New England's stateliest type of man, 10  
In port and speech Olympian;

<sup>2</sup> See the note on 'Ichabod,' p. 282.

Whom no one met, at first, but took  
 A second awed and wondering look  
 (As turned, perchance, the eyes of Greece  
 On Phidias' unveiled masterpiece);  
 Whose words in simplest homespun clad,  
 The Saxon strength of Cædmon's had,  
 With power reserved at need to reach  
 The Roman forum's loftiest speech,  
 Sweet with persuasion, eloquent 20  
 In passion, cool in argument,  
 Or, ponderous, falling on thy foes  
 As fell the Norse god's hammer blows,  
 Crushing as if with Talus' flail  
 Through Error's logic-woven mail,  
 And failing only when they tried  
 The adamant of the righteous side, —  
 Thou, foiled in aim and hope, bereaved  
 Of old friends, by the new deceived,  
 Too soon for us, too soon for thee, 30  
 Beside thy lonely Northern sea,  
 Where long and low the marsh-lands spread,  
 Laid wearily down thy august head.

Thou shouldst have lived to feel below  
 Thy feet Disunion's fierce upthrow;  
 The late-sprung mine that underlaid  
 Thy sad concessions vainly made.  
 Thou shouldst have seen from Sumter's wall  
 The star-flag of the Union fall,  
 And armed rebellion pressing on 40  
 The broken lines of Washington!  
 No stronger voice than thine had then  
 Called out the utmost might of men,  
 To make the Union's charter free  
 And strengthen law by liberty.  
 How had that stern arbitrament  
 To thy gray age youth's vigor lent,  
 Shaming ambition's paltry prize  
 Before thy disillusioned eyes;  
 Breaking the spell about thee wound 50  
 Like the green withes that Samson bound;  
 Redeeming in one effort grand,  
 Thyself and thy imperilled land!  
 Ah, cruel fate, that closed to thee,  
 O sleeper by the Northern sea,  
 The gates of opportunity!  
 God fills the gaps of human need,  
 Each crisis brings its word and deed.  
 Wise men and strong we did not lack;  
 But still, with memory turning back, 60  
 In the dark hours we thought of thee,  
 And thy lone grave beside the sea.  
 Above that grave the east winds blow,  
 And from the marsh-lands drifting slow  
 The sea-fog comes, with evermore

The wave-wash of a lonely shore,  
 And sea-bird's melancholy cry,  
 As Nature fain would typify  
 The sadness of a closing scene,  
 The loss of that which should have been. 70  
 But, where thy native mountains bare  
 Their foreheads to diviner air,  
 Fit emblem of enduring fame,  
 One lofty summit keeps thy name.  
 For thee the cosmic forces did  
 The rearing of that pyramid,  
 The prescient ages shaping with  
 Fire, flood, and frost thy monolith.  
 Sunrise and sunset lay thereon  
 With hands of light their benison, 80  
 The stars of midnight pause to set  
 Their jewels in its coronet.  
 And evermore that mountain mass  
 Seems climbing from the shadowy pass<sup>1</sup>  
 To light, as if to manifest  
 Thy nobler self, thy life at best!

1880.

## STORM ON LAKE ASQUAM

A CLOUD, like that the old-time Hebrew saw  
 On Carmel prophesying rain, began  
 To lift itself o'er wooded Cardigan,  
 Growing and blackening. Suddenly, a flaw  
 Of chill wind menaced; then a strong blast  
 beat  
 Down the long valley's murmuring pines,  
 and woke  
 The noon-dream of the sleeping lake, and  
 broke  
 Its smooth steel mirror at the mountains'  
 feet.

Thunderous and vast, a fire-veined darkness  
 swept  
 Over the rough pine-bearded Asquam  
 range;  
 A wraith of tempest, wonderful and  
 strange,  
 From peak to peak the cloudy giant stepped.

One moment, as if challenging the storm,  
 Chocorua's tall, defiant sentinel  
 Looked from his watch-tower; then the  
 shadow fell,  
 And the wild rain-drift blotted out his form.

<sup>1</sup> Mt. Webster stands next the White Mountain Notch,  
 at the southern end of the Presidential Range.

And over all the still unhidden sun,  
Weaving its light through slant-blown  
veils of rain,  
Smiled on the trouble, as hope smiles on  
pain;  
And, when the tumult and the strife were  
done,

With one foot on the lake, and one on  
land,  
Framing within his crescent's tinted  
streak  
A far-off picture of the Melvin peak,  
Spent broken clouds the rainbow's angel  
spanned.

1882.

## THE POET AND THE CHILDREN

LONGFELLOW

With a glory of winter sunshine  
Over his locks of gray,  
In the old historic mansion  
He sat on his last birthday;

With his books and his pleasant pic-  
tures,  
And his household and his kin,  
While a sound as of myriads singing  
From far and near stole in.

It came from his own fair city,  
From the prairie's boundless plain, 10  
From the Golden Gate of sunset,  
And the cedarn woods of Maine.

And his heart grew warm within him,  
And his moistening eyes grew dim,  
For he knew that his country's children  
Were singing the songs of him:

The lays of his life's glad morning,  
The psalms of his evening time,  
Whose echoes shall float forever  
On the winds of every clime. 20

All their beautiful consolations,  
Sent forth like birds of cheer,  
Came flocking back to his windows,  
And sang in the Poet's ear.

Grateful, but solemn and tender,  
The music rose and fell

With a joy akin to sadness  
And a greeting like farewell.

With a sense of awe he listened  
To the voices sweet and young; 30  
The last of earth and the first of heaven  
Seemed in the songs they sung.

And waiting a little longer  
For the wonderful change to come,  
He heard the Summoning Angel,  
Who calls God's children home!

And to him in a holier welcome  
Was the mystical meaning given  
Of the words of the blessed Master:  
'Of such is the kingdom of heaven!' 40  
1882.

## AN AUTOGRAPH

I WRITE my name as one,  
On sands by waves o'errun  
Or winter's frosted pane,  
Traces a record vain.

Oblivion's blankness claims  
Wiser and better names,  
And well my own may pass  
As from the strand or glass.

Wash on, O waves of time!  
Melt, noons, the frosty rime! 10  
Welcome the shadow vast,  
The silence that shall last!

When I and all who know  
And love me vanish so,  
What harm to them or me  
Will the lost memory be?

If any words of mine,  
Through right of life divine,  
Remain, what matters it  
Whose hand the message writ? 20

Why should the 'crown's quest'  
Sit on my worst or best?  
Why should the showman claim  
The poor ghost of my name?

Yet, as when dies a sound  
Its spectre lingers round,  
Haply my spent life will  
Leave some faint echo still.

A whisper giving breath  
Of praise or blame to death,  
Soothing or saddening such  
As loved the living much. 30

Therefore with yearnings vain  
And fond I still would fain  
A kindly judgment seek,  
A tender thought bespeak.

And, while my words are read,  
Let this at least be said:  
'Whate'er his life's defeatures,  
He loved his fellow-creatures. 40

'If, of the Law's stone table,  
To hold he scarce was able  
The first great precept fast,  
He kept for man the last.

'Through mortal lapse and dulness  
What lacks the Eternal Fulness,  
If still our weakness can  
Love Him in loving man?

'Age brought him no despairing  
Of the world's future faring;  
In human nature still  
He found more good than ill. 50

'To all who dumbly suffered,  
His tongue and pen he offered;  
His life was not his own,  
Nor lived for self alone.

'Hater of din and riot  
He lived in days unquiet;  
And, lover of all beauty,  
Trod the hard ways of duty. 60

'He meant no wrong to any  
He sought the good of many,  
Yet knew both sin and folly, —  
May God forgive him wholly!' 1882?

### UNITY<sup>1</sup>

FORGIVE, O Lord, our severing ways,  
The separate altars that we raise,  
The varying tongues that speak thy praise!

<sup>1</sup> This poem was written by Mr. Whittier while he was a guest at the Asquam House. A fair was being held in aid of the little Episcopal church at Holderness, and people at the hotel were asked to contribute. These lines were Whittier's contribution, and the ladies

Suffice it now. In time to be  
Shall one great temple rise to Thee,  
Thy church our broad humanity.

White flowers of love its walls shall  
climb,  
Sweet bells of peace shall ring its chime,  
Its days shall all be holy time.

The hymn, long sought, shall then be  
heard,  
The music of the world's accord,  
Confessing Christ, the inward word!

That song shall swell from shore to shore,  
One faith, one love, one hope restore  
The seamless garb that Jesus wore!  
1883.

### SWEET FERN

THE subtle power in perfume found  
Nor priest nor sibyl vainly learned;  
On Grecian shrine or Aztec mound  
No censer idly burned.

That power the old-time worships knew,  
The Corybantes' frenzied dance,  
The Pythian priestess swooning through  
The wonderland of trance.

And Nature holds, in wood and field,  
Her thousand sunlit censers still; 10  
To spells of flower and shrub we yield  
Against or with our will.

I climbed a hill path strange and new  
With slow feet, pausing at each turn;  
A sudden waft of west wind blew  
The breath of the sweet fern.

That fragrance from my vision swept  
The alien landscape; in its stead,  
Up fairer hills of youth I stepped,  
As light of heart as tread. 20

I saw my boyhood's lakelet shine  
Once more through rifts of woodland  
shade;  
I knew my river's winding line  
By morning mist betrayed.

In charge of the fair received ten dollars for them. They were written in an album now in the possession of a niece of Whittier's Philadelphia friend, Joseph Liddon Pennock. (PICKARD.)

With me June's freshness, lapsing brook,  
Murmurs of leaf and bee, the call  
Of birds, and one in voice and look  
In keeping with them all.

A fern beside the way we went  
She plucked, and, smiling, held it up, <sup>30</sup>  
While from her hand the wild, sweet  
scent  
I drank as from a cup.

O potent witchery of smell!  
The dust-dry leaves to life return,  
And she who plucked them owns the  
spell  
And lifts her ghostly fern.

Or sense or spirit? Who shall say  
What touch the chord of memory thrills?  
It passed, and left the August day  
Ablaze on lonely hills.

<sup>40</sup>  
1884.

### SAMUEL J. TILDEN

GREYSTONE, AUGUST 4, 1886

ONCE more, O all-adjusting Death!  
The nation's Pantheon opens wide;  
Once more, a common sorrow saith  
A strong, wise man has died.

Faults doubtless had he. Had we not  
Our own, to question and asperse  
The worth we doubted or forgot  
Until beside his hearse?

Ambitious, cautious, yet the man  
To strike down fraud with resolute  
hand;  
A patriot, if a partisan,  
He loved his native land.

So let the mourning bells be rung,  
The banner droop its folds half way,  
And while the public pen and tongue  
Their fitting tribute pay,

Shall we not vow above his bier \  
To set our feet on party lies,  
And wound no more a living ear  
With words that Death denies?

1886.

1886.

### THE BARTHOLDI STATUE

1886

THE land, that, from the rule of kings,  
In freeing us, itself made free,  
Our Old World Sister, to us brings  
Her sculptured Dream of Liberty:

Unlike the shapes on Egypt's sands  
Uplifted by the toil-worn slave,  
On Freedom's soil with freemen's hands  
We rear the symbol free hands gave.

O France, the beautiful! to thee  
Once more a debt of love we owe:  
In peace beneath thy Colors Three,  
We hail a later Rochambeau!

Rise, stately Symbol! holding forth  
Thy light and hope to all who sit  
In chains and darkness! Belt the earth  
With watch-fires from thy torch uplift!

Reveal the primal mandate still  
Which Chaos heard and ceased to be,  
Trace on mid-air th' Eternal Will  
In signs of fire: 'Let man be free!'

Shine far, shine free, a guiding light  
To Reason's ways and Virtue's aim,  
A lightning-flash the wretch to smite  
Who shields his license with thy name!

1886.

### TO E. C. S.<sup>1</sup>

POET and friend of poets, if thy glass  
Detects no flower in winter's tuft of  
grass,  
Let this slight token of the debt I owe  
Outlive for thee December's frozen  
day,  
And, like the arbutus budding under  
snow,  
Take bloom and fragrance from some  
morn of May  
When he who gives it shall have gone the  
way  
Where faith shall see and reverent trust  
shall know.

1890.

<sup>1</sup> The dedication of Whittier's last volume, *At Swan-down*, to Edmund Clarence Stedman.

## THE LAST EVE OF SUMMER

THE last sun nigh unto setting shines  
Through yon columnar pines,  
On the deepening shadows of the  
lawn  
Its golden lines are drawn.

Coming of long gone summer days like  
this,  
Feeling the wind's soft kiss,  
Full and glad that failing ear and  
sight  
Have still their old delight,

alone, and watch the warm, sweet  
day  
Lapse tenderly away;  
wistful, with a feeling of forecast,  
I ask, 'Is this the last?' 10

Will nevermore for me the seasons run  
Their round, and will the sun  
Of ardent summers yet to come forget  
For me to rise and set?' 20

Thou shouldst be here, or I should be with  
thee  
Wherever thou mayst be,  
Lips mute, hands clasped, in silences of  
speech  
Each answering unto each. 20

For this still hour, this sense of mystery  
far  
Beyond the evening star,  
No words outworn suffice on lip or scroll:  
The soul would fain with soul

Wait, while these few swift-passing days  
fulfil  
The wise-disposing Will,  
And, in the evening as at morning, trust  
The All-Merciful and Just.

The solemn joy that soul-communion feels  
Immortal life reveals; 30  
And human love, its prophecy and sign,  
Interprets love divine.

Come then, in thought, if that alone may be,  
O friend! and bring with thee  
Thy calm assurance of transcendent Spheres  
And the Eternal Years!

1890.

1890.

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

FROM purest wells of English undefiled  
None deeper drank than he, the New  
World's child,  
Who in the language of their farm-fields  
spoke  
The wit and wisdom of New England folk,  
Shaming a monstrous wrong. The world-  
wide laugh  
Provoked thereby might well have shaken  
half  
The walls of Slavery down, ere yet the ball  
And mine of battle overthrew them all.  
1891.

## TO OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

8TH MO. 29TH, 1892

AMONG the thousands who with hail and  
cheer  
Will welcome thy new year,  
How few of all have passed, as thou and I,  
So many milestones by!

We have grown old together; we have  
seen,  
Our youth and age between,  
Two generations leave us, and to-day  
We with the third hold way,

Loving and loved. If thought must back-  
ward run  
To those who, one by one, 10  
In the great silence and the dark beyond  
Vanished with farewells fond,

Unseen, not lost; our grateful memories  
still  
Their vacant places fill,  
And with the full-voiced greeting of new  
friends  
A tenderer whisper blends.

Linked close in a pathetic brotherhood  
Of mingled ill and good,  
Of joy and grief, of grandeur and of shame,  
For pity more than blame, — 20

The gift is thine the weary world to make  
More cheerful for thy sake,  
Soothing the ears its Miserere pains,  
With the old Hellenic strains,



Lighting the sullen face of discontent  
 With smiles for blessing sent.  
 Enough of selfish wailing has been had,  
 Thank God ! for notes more glad.

Life is indeed no holiday; therein  
 Are want, and woe, and sin, <sup>30</sup>  
 Death and its nameless fears, and over all  
 Our pitying tears must fall.

Sorrow is real; but the counterfeit  
 Which folly brings to it,  
 We need thy wit and wisdom to resist,  
 O rarest Optimist !

Thy hand, old friend ! the service of our  
 days,  
 In differing moods and ways  
 May prove to those who follow in our train  
 Not valueless nor vain. <sup>40</sup>

Far off, and faint as echoes of a dream,  
 The songs of boyhood seem,  
 Yet on our autumn boughs, unflown with  
 spring,  
 The evening thrushes sing.

The hour draws near, howe'er delayed and  
 late,  
 When at the Eternal Gate  
 We leave the words and works we call our  
 own,  
 And lift void hands alone

For love to fill. Our nakedness of  
 soul  
 Brings to that Gate no toll; <sup>5</sup>  
 Giftless we come to Him, who all things  
 gives,  
 And live because He lives.

1892.

1892.

# OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

## OLD IRONSIDES<sup>1</sup>

AY, tear her tattered ensign down !  
Long has it waved on high,  
And many an eye has danced to see  
That banner in the sky;  
Beneath it rung the battle shout,  
And burst the cannon's roar; —  
The meteor of the ocean air  
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,  
Where knelt the vanquished foe,  
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,  
And waves were white below,  
No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
Or know the conquered knee; —  
The harpies of the shore shall pluck  
The eagle of the sea !

Oh, better that her shattered hulk  
Should sink beneath the wave;

<sup>1</sup> One genuine lyric outburst, however, done in this year of the law, almost made him in a way actually famous. The frigate *Constitution*, historic indeed, but old and unseaworthy, then lying in the navy yard at Charlestown, was condemned by the Navy Department to be destroyed. Holmes read this in a newspaper paragraph, and it stirred him. On a scrap of paper, with a lead pencil, he rapidly shaped the impetuous stanzas of 'Old Ironsides,' and sent them to the *Daily Advertiser*, of Boston. Fast and far they travelled through the newspaper press of the country; they were even printed in hand-bills and circulated about the streets of Washington. An occurrence, which otherwise would probably have passed unnoticed, now stirred a national indignation. The astonished Secretary made haste to retrace a step which he had taken quite innocently in the way of business. The *Constitution's* tattered ensign was not torn down. The ringing, spirited verses gave the gallant ship a reprieve, which satisfied sentimentality, and a large part of the people of the United States had heard of O. W. Holmes, law student at Cambridge, who had only come of age a month ago. (*Morse's Life of Holmes*, vol. i, pp. 79, 80.)

This is probably the only case in which a government policy was changed by the verses of a college student.

The frigate *Constitution* was launched in 1797, first served in the war against the pirates in the Mediterranean, and made a brilliant record in the war of 1812. In 1834 she was almost entirely rebuilt, and continued in commission until 1881. From that time she was kept at the navy yard at Portsmouth, N. H., until in 1897 she was taken to the Charlestown Navy Yard for the celebration of the centenary of her launching.

Her thunders shook the mighty deep,  
And there should be her grave;  
Nail to the mast her holy flag,  
Set every threadbare sail,  
And give her to the god of storms,  
The lightning and the gale !

1830.

1830.

## THE BALLAD OF THE OYSTER-MAN<sup>2</sup>

It was a tall young oysterman lived by the  
river-side,  
His shop was just upon the bank, his boat  
was on the tide;  
The daughter of a fisherman, that was so  
straight and slim,  
Lived over on the other bank, right oppo-  
site to him.

It was the pensive oysterman that saw a  
lovely maid,  
Upon a moonlight evening, a-sitting in the  
shade;  
He saw her wave her handkerchief, as much  
as if to say,  
'I'm wide awake, young oysterman, and all  
the folks away.'

Then up arose the oysterman, and to him-  
self said he,  
'I guess I'll leave the skiff at home, for  
fear that folks should see;  
I read it in the story-book, that, for to kiss  
his dear,  
Leander swam the Hellespont, — and I will  
swim this here.'

<sup>2</sup> Except for the ballad of 'Old Ironsides,' the 'Metrical Essay on Poetry' written for the Phi Beta Kappa meeting in 1836, and a few other occasional poems, Holmes wrote little but humorous verse from 1830 to 1848; most of this he excluded from the later editions of his work. 'The Ballad of the Oysterman,' and 'The Spectre Pig,' are the best of his parodies on the pseudo-ballads so popular at that time.

And he has leaped into the waves, and  
crossed the shining stream,  
And he has clambered up the bank, all in  
the moonlight gleam;  
Oh there were kisses sweet as dew, and  
words as soft as rain, —  
But they have heard her father's step, and  
in he leaps again !

Out spoke the ancient fisherman, — ' Oh,  
what was that, my daughter ?'  
' 'T was nothing but a pebble, sir, I threw  
into the water.'  
' And what is that, pray tell me, love, that  
paddles off so fast ?'  
' It's nothing but a porpoise, sir, that's been  
a-swimming past.'

Out spoke the ancient fisherman, — ' Now  
bring me my harpoon !  
I'll get into my fishing-boat, and fix the  
fellow soon.'  
Down fell that pretty innocent, as falls a  
snow-white lamb,  
Her hair drooped round her pallid cheeks,  
like seaweed on a clam.

Alas for those two loving ones ! she waked  
not from her swoond,  
And he was taken with the cramp, and in  
the waves was drowned;  
But Fate has metamorphosed them, in pity  
of their woe,  
And now they keep an oyster-shop for mer-  
maids down below.

1830 ?

### THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICU- LOUS

I WROTE some lines once on a time  
In wondrous merry mood,  
And thought, as usual, men would say  
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,  
I laughed as I would die;  
Albeit, in the general way,  
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;  
How kind it was of him  
To mind a slender man like me,  
He of the mighty limb !

10

' These to the painter,' I exclaimed,  
And, in my humorous way,  
I added (as a trifling jest),  
' There'll be the devil to pay.'

He took the paper, and I watched,  
And saw him peep within;  
At the first line he read, his face  
Was all upon the grin.

20

He read the next; the grin grew broad,  
And shot from ear to ear;  
He read the third; a chuckling noise  
I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;  
The fifth; his waistband split;  
The sixth; he burst five buttons off,  
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,  
I watched that wretched man,  
And since, I never dare to write  
As funny as I can.

1830.

### TO AN INSECT

I LOVE to hear thine earnest voice,  
Wherever thou art hid,  
Thou testy little dogmatist,  
Thou pretty Katydid !  
Thou mindest me of gentlefolks, —  
Old gentlefolks are they, —  
Thou say'st an undisputed thing  
In such a solemn way.

Thou art a female, Katydid !  
I know it by the trill  
That quivers through thy piercing notes,  
So petulant and shrill;  
I think there is a knot of you  
Beneath the hollow tree, —  
A knot of spinster Katydids, —  
Do Katydids drink tea ?

10

Oh, tell me where did Katy live,  
And what did Katy do ?  
And was she very fair and young,  
And yet so wicked, too ?  
Did Katy love a naughty man,  
Or kiss more cheeks than one ?

20

I warrant Katy did no more  
Than many a Kate has done.

Dear me ! I'll tell you all about  
My fuss with little Jane,  
And Ann, with whom I used to walk  
So often down the lane,  
And all that tore their locks of black,  
Or wet their eyes of blue, — 30  
Pray tell me, sweetest Katydid,  
What did poor Katy do ?

Ah no ! the living oak shall crash,  
That stood for ages still,  
The rock shall rend its mossy base  
And thunder down the hill,  
Before the little Katydid  
Shall add one word, to tell  
The mystic story of the maid  
Whose name she knows so well. 40

Peace to the ever-murmuring race !  
And when the latest one  
Shall fold in death her feeble wings  
Beneath the autumn sun,  
Then shall she raise her fainting voice,  
And lift her drooping lid,  
And then the child of future years  
Shall hear what Katy did.

1831.

### L'INCONNUE

Is thy name Mary, maiden fair ?  
Such should, methinks, its music be;  
The sweetest name that mortals bear  
Were best befitting thee;  
And she to whom it once was given,  
Was half of earth and half of heaven.

I hear thy voice, I see thy smile,  
I look upon thy folded hair;  
Ah ! while we dream not they beguile,  
Our hearts are in the snare;  
And she who chains a wild bird's wing  
Must start not if her captive sing.

So, lady, take the leaf that falls,  
To all but thee unseen, unknown:  
When evening shades thy silent walls,  
Then read it all alone;  
In stillness read, in darkness seal,  
Forget, despise, but not reveal !

1831.

### MY AUNT

My aunt ! my dear unmarried aunt !  
Long years have o'er her flown ;  
Yet still she strains the aching clasp  
That binds her virgin zone;  
I know it hurts her, — though she looks  
As cheerful as she can;  
Her waist is ampler than her life,  
For life is but a span.

My aunt ! my poor deluded aunt !  
Her hair is almost gray; 10  
Why will she train that winter curl  
In such a spring-like way ?  
How can she lay her glasses down,  
And say she reads as well,  
When through a double convex lens  
She just makes out to spell ?

Her father — grandpapa ! forgive  
This erring lip its smiles —  
Vowed she should make the finest girl  
Within a hundred miles; 20  
He sent her to a stylish school;  
'T was in her thirteenth June;  
And with her, as the rules required,  
'Two towels and a spoon.'

They braced my aunt against a board,  
To make her straight and tall ;  
They laced her up, they starved her down,  
To make her light and small;  
They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,  
They screwed it up with pins; — 30  
Oh, never mortal suffered more  
In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,  
My grandsire brought her back  
(By daylight, lest some rabid youth  
Might follow on the track);  
'Ah !' said my grandsire, as he shook  
Some powder in his pan,  
'What could this lovely creature do  
Against a desperate man !' 40

Alas ! nor chariot, nor barouche,  
Nor bandit cavalcade,  
Tore from the trembling father's arms  
His all-accomplished maid.  
For her how happy had it been !  
And Heaven had spared to me  
To see one sad, ungathered rose  
On my ancestral tree.

1831.

THE LAST LEAF<sup>1</sup>

I saw him once before,  
As he passed by the door,  
And again  
The pavement stones resound,  
As he totters o'er the ground  
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,  
Ere the pruning-knife of Time  
Cut him down,  
Not a better man was found 10  
By the Crier on his round  
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,  
And he looks at all he meets  
Sad and wan,

<sup>1</sup> The poem was suggested by the sight of a figure well known to Bostonians [in 1831 or 1832], that of Major Thomas Melville, 'the last of the cocked hats,' as he was sometimes called. The Major had been a personable young man, very evidently, and retained evidence of it in

The monumental pomp of age —

which had something imposing and something odd about it for youthful eyes like mine. He was often pointed at as one of the 'Indians' of the famous 'Boston Tea-Party' of 1774. His aspect among the crowds of a later generation reminded me of a withered leaf which has held to its stem through the storms of autumn and winter, and finds itself still clinging to its bough while the new growths of spring are bursting their buds and spreading their foliage all around it. I make this explanation for the benefit of those who have been puzzled by the lines,

The last leaf upon the tree  
In the spring.

The way in which it came to be written in a somewhat singular measure was this. I had become a little known as a versifier, and I thought that one or two other young writers were following my efforts with imitations, not meant as parodies and hardly to be considered improvements on their models. I determined to write in a measure which would at once betray any copyist. So far as it was suggested by any previous poem, the echo must have come from Campbell's 'Battle of the Baltic,' with its short terminal lines, such as the last of these two,

By thy wild and stormy steep,  
Elsinore.

But I do not remember any poem in the same measure, except such as have been written since its publication. (Holmes.)

Holmes wrote to his publishers in 1894: 'I have lasted long enough to serve as an illustration of my own poem. . . . It was with a smile on my lips that I wrote it; I cannot read it without a sigh of tender remembrance. I hope it will not sadden my older readers, while it may amuse some of the younger ones to whom its experiences are as yet only floating fancies.'

Lincoln called the poem 'inexpressibly touching,' and knew it by heart. Holmes possessed a copy of it written out by Edgar Allan Poe. Whittier (*Prose Works*, vol. iii, p. 381) called it a 'unique compound of humor and pathos.'

And he shakes his feeble head,  
That it seems as if he said,  
They are gone.'

The mossy marbles rest  
On the lips that he has prest 20  
In their bloom,  
And the names he loved to hear  
Have been carved for many a year  
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —  
Poor old lady, she is dead  
Long ago —  
That he had a Roman nose,  
And his cheek was like a rose  
In the snow; 30

But now his nose is thin,  
And it rests upon his chin  
Like a staff,  
And a crook is in his back,  
And a melancholy crack  
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin  
For me to sit and grin  
At him here;  
But the old three-cornered hat, 40  
And the breeches, and all that,  
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be  
The last leaf upon the tree  
In the spring,  
Let them smile, as I do now,  
At the old forsaken bough  
Where I cling.

1831 or 1832.

(1836.)<sup>2</sup>

## LA GRISETTE

AH, Clemence! when I saw thee last  
Trip down the Rue de Seine,  
And turning, when thy form had past,  
I said, 'We meet again,' —  
I dreamed not in that idle glance  
Thy latest image came,

<sup>2</sup> Just when it was written I cannot exactly say, nor in what paper or periodical it was first published. It must have been written before April, 1833; probably in 1831 or 1832. It was republished in the first edition of my poems in 1836. (Holmes, Note to the illustrated edition of 'The Last Leaf,' 1885.)

And only left to memory's trance  
A shadow and a name.

The few strange words my lips had taught  
Thy timid voice to speak, 10  
Their gentler signs, which often brought  
Fresh roses to thy cheek,  
The trailing of thy long loose hair  
Bent o'er my couch of pain,  
All, all returned, more sweet, more fair;  
Oh, had we met again!

I walked where saint and virgin keep  
The vigil lights of Heaven,  
I knew that thou hadst woes to weep,  
And sins to be forgiven; 20  
I watched where Genevieve was laid,  
I knelt by Mary's shrine,  
Beside me low, soft voices prayed;  
Alas! but where was thine?

And when the morning sun was bright,  
When wind and wave were calm,  
And flamed, in thousand-tinted light,  
The rose of Notre Dame,  
I wandered through the haunts of men,  
From Boulevard to Quai, 30  
Till, frowning o'er Saint Etienne,  
The Pantheon's shadow lay.

In vain, in vain; we meet no more,  
Nor dream what fates befall;  
And long upon the stranger's shore  
My voice on thee may call,  
When years have clothed the line in  
moss  
That tells thy name and days,  
And withered, on thy simple cross,  
The wreaths of Père-la-Chaise! 40  
1836.

### OUR YANKEE GIRLS

Let greener lands and bluer skies,  
If such the wide earth shows,  
With fairer cheeks and brighter eyes,  
Match us the star and rose;  
The winds that lift the Georgian's veil,  
Or wave Circassia's curls,  
Waft to their shores the sultan's sail, —  
Who buys our Yankee girls?

The gay grisette, whose fingers touch  
Love's thousand chords so well; 10

The dark Italian, loving much,  
But more than *one* can tell;  
And England's fair-haired, blue-eyed dame,  
Who binds her brow with pearls; —  
Ye who have seen them, can they shame  
Our own sweet Yankee girls?

And what if court or castle vaunt  
Its children loftier born?  
Who heeds the silken tassel's flaunt  
Beside the golden corn? 20  
They ask not for the dainty toil  
Of ribboned knights and earls,  
The daughters of the virgin soil,  
Our freeborn Yankee girls!

By every hill whose stately pines  
Wave their dark arms above  
The home where some fair being shines,  
To warm the wilds with love,  
From barest rock to bleakest shore  
Where farthest sail unfurls, 30  
That stars and stripes are streaming o'er, —  
God bless our Yankee girls!

1836.

### ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL<sup>1</sup>

This ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of  
good old times,  
Of joyous days and jolly nights, and merry  
Christmas chimes;  
They were a free and jovial race, but  
honest, brave, and true,  
Who dipped their ladle in the punch when  
this old bowl was new.

A Spanish galleon brought the bar, — so  
runs the ancient tale;  
'T was hammered by an Antwerp smith,  
whose arm was like a flail;  
And now and then between the strokes, for  
fear his strength should fail,  
He wiped his brow and quaffed a cup of  
good old Flemish ale.

'T was purchased by an English squire to  
please his loving dame,

<sup>1</sup> This 'punch-bowl' was, according to old family tradition, a *caudle-cup*. It is a massive piece of silver, its cherubs and other ornaments of coarse repoussé work, and has two handles like a loving-cup, by which it was held, or passed from guest to guest. (Holmes.)

Who saw the cherubs, and conceived a  
 longing for the same; <sup>10</sup>  
 And oft as on the ancient stock another  
 twig was found,  
 'T was filled with caudle spiced and hot,  
 and handed smoking round.

But, changing hands, it reached at length a  
 Puritan divine,  
 Who used to follow Timothy, and take a  
 little wine,  
 But hated punch and prelacy; and so it  
 was, perhaps,  
 He went to Leyden, where he found con-  
 venticles and schnapps.

And then, of course, you know what's  
 next: it left the Dutchman's shore  
 With those that in the Mayflower came, —  
 a hundred souls and more, —  
 Along with all the furniture, to fill their  
 new abodes, —  
 To judge by what is still on hand, at least  
 a hundred loads. <sup>20</sup>

'T was on a dreary winter's eve, the night  
 was closing dim,  
 When brave Miles Standish took the bowl,  
 and filled it to the brim;  
 The little Captain stood and stirred the  
 posset with his sword,  
 And all his sturdy men-at-arms were  
 ranged about the board.

He poured the fiery Hollands in, — the  
 man that never feared, —  
 He took a long and solemn draught, and  
 wiped his yellow beard;  
 And one by one the musketeers — the men  
 that fought and prayed —  
 All drank as 't were their mother's milk,  
 and not a man afraid.

That night, affrighted from his nest, the  
 screaming eagle flew,  
 He heard the Pequot's ringing whoop, the  
 soldier's wild halloo; <sup>30</sup>  
 And there the sachem learned the rule he  
 taught to kith and kin:  
 'Run from the white man when you find  
 he smells of Holland's gin!'

A hundred years, and fifty more, had  
 spread their leaves and snows,

A thousand rubs had flattened down each  
 little cherub's nose,  
 When once again the bowl was filled, but  
 not in mirth or joy, —  
 'T was mingled by a mother's hand to  
 cheer her parting boy.

Drink, John, she said, 't will do you good,  
 — poor child, you'll never bear  
 This working in the dismal trench, out in  
 the midnight air;  
 And if — God bless me! — you were hurt,  
 't would keep away the chill.  
 So John *did* drink, — and well he wrought  
 that night at Bunker's Hill! <sup>40</sup>

I tell you, there was generous warmth in  
 good old English cheer;  
 I tell you, 't was a pleasant thought to  
 bring its symbol here.  
 'T is but the fool that loves excess; hast  
 thou a drunken soul?  
 Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my  
 silver bowl!

I love the memory of the past, — its  
 pressed yet fragrant flowers, —  
 The moss that clothes its broken walls, the  
 ivy on its towers;  
 Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed, —  
 my eyes grow moist and dim,  
 To think of all the vanished joys that  
 danced around its brim.

Then fill a fair and honest cup, and bear it  
 straight to me;  
 The goblet hallows all it holds, whate'er  
 the liquid be; <sup>50</sup>  
 And may the cherubs on its face protect  
 me from the sin  
 That dooms one to those dreadful words,  
 — 'My dear, where have you  
 been?'

(1848.)

## THE STETHOSCOPE SONG

### A PROFESSIONAL BALLAD

THERE was a young man in Boston town,  
 He bought him a stethoscope nice and  
 new,  
 All mounted and finished and polished  
 down,  
 With an ivory cap and a stopper too.



It happened a spider within did crawl,  
And spun him a web of ample size,  
Wherein there chanced one day to fall  
A couple of very imprudent flies.

The first was a bottle-fly, big and blue,  
The second was smaller, and thin and  
long;  
So there was a concert between the two,  
Like an octave flute and a tavern gong.

Now being from Paris but recently,  
This fine young man would show his  
skill;  
And so they gave him, his hand to try,  
A hospital patient extremely ill.

Some said that his *liver* was short of *bile*,  
And some that his *heart* was over size,  
While some kept arguing, all the while,  
He was crammed with *tubercles* up to his  
eyes.

This fine young man then up stepped he,  
And all the doctors made a pause;  
Said he, The man must die, you see,  
By the fifty-seventh of Louis's laws.

But since the case is a desperate one,  
To explore his chest it may be well;  
For if he should die and it were not done,  
You know the *autopsy* would not tell.

Then out his stethoscope he took,  
And on it placed his curious ear;  
*Mon Dieu!* said he, with a knowing look,  
Why, here is a sound that's mighty  
queer!

The *bourdonnement* is very clear, —  
*Amphoric buzzing*, as I'm alive!  
Five doctors took their turn to hear;  
*Amphoric buzzing*, said all the five.

There's *empyema* beyond a doubt;  
We'll plunge a *trocar* in his side.  
The diagnosis was made out, —  
They tapped the patient; so he died.

Now such as hate new-fashioned toys  
Began to look extremely glum;  
They said that *rattles* were made for  
boys,  
And vowed that his *buzzing* was all a  
hum.

There was an old lady had long been sick,  
And what was the matter none did  
know:  
Her pulse was slow, though her tongue was  
quick;  
To her this knowing youth must go.

So there the nice old lady sat,  
With phials and boxes all in a row;  
She asked the young doctor what he was  
at,  
To thump her and tumble her ruffles  
so.

Now, when the stethoscope came out,  
The flies began to buzz and whiz:  
Oh, ho! the matter is clear, no doubt;  
An *aneurism* there plainly is.

The *bruit de râpe* and the *bruit de scie*  
And the *bruit de diable* are all combined;  
How happy Bouillaud would be,  
If he a case like this could find!

Now, when the neighboring doctors found  
A case so rare had been descried,  
They every day her ribs did pound  
In squads of twenty; so she died.

Then six young damsels, slight and frail,  
Received this kind young doctor's cares;  
They all were getting slim and pale,  
And short of breath on mounting stairs.

They all made rhymes with 'sighs' and  
'skies,'  
And loathed their puddings and buttered  
rolls,  
And dieted, much to their friends' surprise,  
On pickles and pencils and chalk and  
coals.

So fast their little hearts did bound,  
The frightened insects buzzed the more;  
So over all their chests he found  
The *rôle sifflant* and the *rôle sonore*.

He shook his head. There's grave dis-  
ease, —  
I greatly fear you all must die;  
A slight *post-mortem*, if you please,  
Surviving friends would gratify.

The six young damsels wept aloud,  
Which so prevailed on six young men

That each his honest love avowed,  
Whereat they all got well again.

This poor young man was all aghast;  
The price of stethoscopes came down;  
And so he was reduced at last  
To practise in a country town.

The doctors being very sore,  
A stethoscope they did devise 90  
That had a rammer to clear the bore,  
With a knob at the end to kill the flies.

Now use your ears, all you that can,  
But don't forget to mind your eyes,  
Or you may be cheated, like this young  
man,  
By a couple of silly, abnormal flies.  
(1848.)

### THE STATESMAN'S SECRET<sup>1</sup>

Who of all statesmen is his country's  
pride,  
Her councils' prompter and her leaders'  
guide?  
He speaks; the nation holds its breath to  
hear;  
He nods, and shakes the sunset hemisphere.  
Born where the primal fount of Nature  
springs  
By the rude cradles of her throneless  
kings,  
In his proud eye her royal signet flames,  
By his own lips her Monarch she pro-  
claims.

Why name his countless triumphs, whom  
to meet  
Is to be famous, envied in defeat? 10  
The keen debaters, trained to brawls and  
strife,  
Who fire one shot, and finish with the  
knife,  
Tried him but once, and, cowering in their  
shame,  
Ground their hacked blades to strike at  
meaner game.  
The lordly chief, his party's central stay,  
Whose lightest word a hundred votes obey,  
Found a new listener seated at his side,  
Looked in his eye, and felt himself defied,

<sup>1</sup> Originally called 'The Disappointed Statesman.'  
See the notes on Emerson's 'Webster,' p. 61, and Whit-  
tier's 'Ichabod,' p. 282.

Flung his rash gauntlet on the startled  
floor,  
Met the all-conquering, fought, — and  
ruled no more.

See where he moves, what eager crowds  
attend!

What shouts of thronging multitudes as-  
cend!

If this is life, — to mark with every hour  
The purple deepening in his robes of  
power,

To see the painted fruits of honor fall  
Thick at his feet, and choose among them  
all,

To hear the sounds that shape his spread-  
ing name

Peal through the myriad organ-stops of  
fame,

Stamp the lone isle that spots the seaman's  
chart,

And crown the pillared glory of the mart, 20  
To count as peers the few supremely  
wise

Who mark their planet in the angels'  
eyes, —

If this is life —

What savage man is he  
Who strides alone beside the sounding  
sea?

Alone he wanders by the murmuring shore,  
His thoughts as restless as the waves that  
roar;

Looks on the sullen sky as stormy-browed  
As on the waves yon tempest-brooding  
cloud,

Heaves from his aching breast a wailing  
sigh,

Sad as the gust that sweeps the clouded  
sky. 40

Ask him his griefs; what midnight demons  
plough

The lines of torture on his lofty brow;  
Unlock those marble lips, and bid them  
speak

The mystery freezing in his bloodless  
cheek.

His secret? Hid beneath a flimsy word;  
One foolish whisper that ambition heard;  
And thus it spake: 'Behold yon gilded  
chair,

The world's one vacant throne, — thy place  
is there!'

Ah, fatal dream! What warning spec-  
tres meet

In ghastly circle round its shadowy seat! 50

**Let** still the Tempter murmurs in his  
 ear  
**The** maddening taunt he cannot choose but  
 hear:  
**Meanest** of slaves, by gods and men ac-  
 curst,  
**He** who is second when he might be first !  
**Climb** with bold front the ladder's topmost  
 round,  
**Or** chain thy creeping footsteps to the  
 ground !'  
**Illustrious Dupe !** Have those majestic  
 eyes  
**Lost** their proud fire for such a vulgar  
 prize?  
**Art** thou the last of all mankind to know  
**That** party-fights are won by aiming low?  
**Thou**, stamped by Nature with her royal  
 sign,  
**That** party-hirelings hate a look like thine?  
**Shake** from thy sense the wild delusive  
 dream !  
**Without** the purple, art thou not su-  
 preme ?  
**And** soothed by love unbought, thy heart  
 shall own  
**A nation's** homage nobler than its throne !  
 1850 ? (1861.)

# AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDS- WORTH<sup>1</sup>

**COME**, spread your wings, as I spread mine,  
 And leave the crowded hall  
 For where the eyes of twilight shine  
 O'er evening's western wall.

These are the pleasant Berkshire hills,  
 Each with its leafy crown;  
 Hark ! from their sides a thousand rills  
 Come singing sweetly down.

A thousand rills; they leap and shine,  
 Strained through the shadowy nooks, 10  
 Till, clasped in many a gathering twine,  
 They swell a hundred brooks.

A hundred brooks, and still they run  
 With ripple, shade, and gleam,

<sup>1</sup> This and the following poem were read by Holmes  
 as postludes to lectures given by him at the Lowell  
 Institute in Boston, in 1853, on English Poetry of the  
 Nineteenth Century. Two years later Lowell lectured  
 at the same Institute on English Poetry from its Origins  
 to Wordsworth.

Till, clustering all their braids in one,  
 They flow a single stream.

A bracelet spun from mountain mist,  
 A silvery sash unwound,  
 With ox-bow curve and sinuous twist  
 It writhes to reach the Sound. 20

This is my bark, — a pygmy's ship;  
 Beneath a child it rolls;  
 Fear not, — one body makes it dip,  
 But not a thousand souls.

Float we the grassy banks between;  
 Without an oar we glide;  
 The meadows, drest in living green,  
 Unroll on either side.

Come, take the book we love so well,  
 And let us read and dream 30  
 We see whate'er its pages tell,  
 And sail an English stream.

Up to the clouds the lark has sprung,  
 Still trilling as he flies;  
 The linnet sings as there he sung;  
 The unseen cuckoo cries,

And daisies strew the banks along,  
 And yellow kingcups shine,  
 With cowslips, and a primrose throng,  
 And humble celandine. 40

Ah foolish dream ! when Nature nursed  
 Her daughter in the West,  
 The fount was drained that opened first;  
 She bared her other breast.

On the young planet's orient shore  
 Her morning hand she tried;  
 Then turned the broad medallion o'er  
 And stamped the sunset side.

Take what she gives, her pine's tall stem,  
 Her elm with hanging spray; 50  
 She wears her mountain diadem  
 Still in her own proud way.

Look on the forests' ancient kings,  
 The hemlock's towering pride:  
 Yon trunk had thrice a hundred rings,  
 And fell before it died.

Nor think that Nature saves her bloom  
 And slights our grassy plain;

For us she wears her court costume, —  
Look on its brodered train; 60

The lily with the sprinkled dots,  
Brands of the noontide beam;  
The cardinal, and the blood-red spots,  
Its double in the stream,

As if some wounded eagle's breast,  
Slow throbbing o'er the plain,  
Had left its airy path impressed  
In drops of scarlet rain.

And hark! and hark! the woodland rings;  
There thrilled the thrush's soul; 70  
And look! that flash of flamy wings, —  
The fire-plumed oriole!

Above, the hen-hawk swims and swoops,  
Flung from the bright, blue sky;  
Below, the robin hops, and whoops  
His piercing Indian cry.

Beauty runs virgin in the woods  
Robed in her rustic green,  
And oft a longing thought intrudes,  
As if we might have seen 80

Her every finger's every joint  
Ringed with some golden line,  
Poet whom Nature did anoint!  
Had our wild home been thine.

Yet think not so; Old England's blood  
Runs warm in English veins;  
But wafted o'er the icy flood  
Its better life remains:

Our children know each wildwood smell,  
The bayberry and the fern, 90  
The man who does not know them well  
Is all too old to learn.

Be patient! On the breathing page  
Still pants our hurried past;  
Pilgrim and soldier, saint and sage, —  
The poet comes the last!

Though still the lark-voiced matins ring  
The world has known so long;  
The wood-thrush of the West shall sing  
Earth's last sweet even-song! 100

1853.

(1861.)

## AFTER A LECTURE ON SHELLEY

ONE broad, white sail in Spezzia's treacher-  
ous bay;  
On comes the blast; too daring bark, be-  
ware!  
The cloud has clasped her; lo! it melts  
away;  
The wide, waste waters, but no sail is  
there.

Morning: a woman looking on the sea;  
Midnight: with lamps the long veranda  
burns;  
Come, wandering sail, they watch, they  
burn for thee!  
Suns come and go, alas! no bark returns.

And feet are thronging on the pebbly  
sands,  
And torches flaring in the weedy caves, 10  
Where'er the waters lay with icy hands  
The shapes uplifted from their coral  
graves.

Vainly they seek; the idle quest is o'er;  
The coarse, dark women, with their hang-  
ing locks,  
And lean, wild children gather from the  
shore  
To the black hovels bedded in the rocks.

But Love still prayed, with agonizing wail,  
'One, one last look, ye heaving waters,  
yield!'  
Till Ocean, clashing in his jointed mail,  
Raised the pale burden on his level  
shield. 20

Slow from the shore the sullen waves re-  
tire;  
His form a nobler element shall claim;  
Nature baptized him in ethereal fire,  
And Death shall crown him with a wreath  
of flame.

Fade, mortal semblance, never to return;  
Swift is the change within thy crimson  
shroud;  
Seal the white ashes in the peaceful urn;  
All else has risen in yon silvery cloud.

Sleep where thy gentle Adonais lies,  
Whose open page lay on thy dying  
heart, 30

**Both** in the smile of those blue-vaulted skies,  
**Earth's** fairest dome of all divinest art.

**Breathe** for his wandering soul one passing  
 sigh,

**O** happier Christian, while thine eye  
 grows dim, —

**In** all the mansions of the house on high,  
**Say** not that Mercy has not one for him !

1853.

(1861.)

## THE HUDSON <sup>1</sup>

### AFTER A LECTURE AT ALBANY

**'T** WAS a vision of childhood that came  
 with its dawn,

**Ere** the curtain that covered life's day-star  
 was drawn;

**The** nurse told the tale when the shadows  
 grew long,

**And** the mother's soft lullaby breathed it in  
 song.

**'There** flows a fair stream by the hills of  
 the West,' —

**She** sang to her boy as he lay on her breast;

**'Along** its smooth margin thy fathers  
 have played;

**Beside** its deep waters their ashes are laid.'

**I** wandered afar from the land of my birth,  
**I** saw the old rivers, renowned upon earth,  
**But** fancy still painted that wide-flowing  
 stream

**With** the many-hued pencil of infancy's  
 dream.

**I** saw the green banks of the castle-crowned  
 Rhine,

**Where** the grapes drink the moonlight and  
 change it to wine;

<sup>1</sup> See the notes on Whittier's 'The Last Walk in Autumn,' p. 292, and on Emerson's 'Written in Naples,' p. 60, and compare a recent sonnet on the Hudson by Mr. George S. Hellman : —

Where in its old historic splendor stands  
 The home of England's far-famed Parliament,  
 And waters of the Thames in calm content  
 At England's fame flow slowly o'er their sands ;  
 And where the Rhine past vine-entwined lands  
 Courses in castled beauty, there I went ;  
 And far to Southern rivers, flower-besprent ;  
 And to the icy streams of Northern strands.  
 Then mine own native shores I trod once more,  
 And, gazing on thy waters' majesty,  
 The memory, O Hudson, came to me  
 Of one who went to seek the wide world o'er  
 For Love, but found it not. Then home turned he  
 And saw his mother waiting at the door.

**I** stood by the Avon, whose waves as they  
 glide  
**Still** whisper his glory who sleeps at their  
 side.

**But** my heart would still yearn for the  
 sound of the waves

**That** sing as they flow by my forefathers'  
 graves;

**If** manhood yet honors my cheek with a tear,  
**I** care not who sees it, — nor blush for it  
 here !

**Farewell** to the deep-bosomed stream of  
 the West !

**I** fling this loose blossom to float on its  
 breast;

**Nor** let the dear love of its children grow  
 cold,

**Till** the channel is dry where its waters  
 have rolled !

1854.

(1861.)

## TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND

**THE** seed that wasteful autumn cast  
 To waver on its stormy blast,  
 Long o'er the wintry desert tost,  
 Its living germ has never lost.  
 Dropped by the weary tempest's wing,  
 It feels the kindling ray of spring,  
 And, starting from its dream of death,  
 Pours on the air its perfumed breath.

**So**, parted by the rolling flood,  
 The love that springs from common blood  
 Needs but a single sunlit hour  
 Of mingling smiles to bud and flower;  
 Unharmed its slumbering life has flown,  
 From shore to shore, from zone to zone,  
 Where summer's falling roses stain  
 The tepid waves of Pontchartrain,  
 Or where the lichen creeps below  
 Katahdin's wreaths of whirling snow.

**Though** fiery sun and stiffening cold  
 May change the fair ancestral mould,  
 No winter chills, no summer drains  
 The life-blood drawn from English veins,  
 Still bearing wheresoe'er it flows  
 The love that with its fountain rose,  
 Unchanged by space, unwronged by time,  
 From age to age, from clime to clime !

(1861.)

THE OLD MAN DREAMS<sup>1</sup>

OH for one hour of youthful joy !  
 Give back my twentieth spring !  
 I 'd rather laugh, a bright-haired boy,  
 Than reign, a gray-beard king.

Off with the spoils of wrinkled age !  
 Away with Learning's crown !  
 Tear out life's Wisdom-written page,  
 And dash its trophies down !

One moment let my life-blood stream  
 From boyhood's fount of flame ! 10  
 Give me one giddy, reeling dream  
 Of life all love and fame !

My listening angel heard the prayer,  
 And, calmly smiling, said,  
 ' If I but touch thy silvered hair  
 Thy hasty wish hath sped.

' But is there nothing in thy track  
 To bid thee fondly stay,  
 While the swift seasons hurry back  
 To find the wished-for day ? ' 20

' Ah, truest soul of womankind !  
 Without thee what were life ?  
 One bliss I cannot leave behind:  
 I 'll take — my — precious — wife ! '

The angel took a sapphire pen  
 And wrote in rainbow dew,  
*The man would be a boy again,  
 And be a husband too !*

' And is there nothing yet unsaid,  
 Before the change appears ? 30  
 Remember, all their gifts have fled  
 With those dissolving years.'

' Why, yes ; ' for memory would recall  
 My fond paternal joys ;  
 ' I could not bear to leave them all —  
 I 'll take — my — girl — and — boys.'

The smiling angel dropped his pen, —  
 ' Why, this will never do ;  
 The man would be a boy again,  
 And be a father too ! ' 40

<sup>1</sup> Written for a reunion of Holmes's college class.  
 See the note on 'The Boys,' p. 374.

And so I laughed, — my laughter woke  
 The household with its noise, —  
 And wrote my dream, when morning broke,  
 To please the gray-haired boys.  
 1854. (1861.)

## BIRTHDAY OF DANIEL WEBSTER

JANUARY 18, 1856

WHEN life hath run its largest round  
 Of toil and triumph, joy and woe,  
 How brief a storied page is found  
 To compass all its outward show !

The world-tried sailor tires and droops ;  
 His flag is rent, his keel forgot ;  
 His farthest voyages seem but loops  
 That float from life's entangled knot.

But when within the narrow space  
 Some larger soul hath lived and  
 wrought, 15  
 Whose sight was open to embrace  
 The boundless realms of deed and  
 thought, —

When, stricken by the freezing blast,  
 A nation's living pillars fall,  
 How rich the storied page, how vast,  
 A word, a whisper, can recall !

No medal lifts its fretted face,  
 Nor speaking marble cheats your eye,  
 Yet, while these pictured lines I trace,  
 A living image passes by: 20

A roof beneath the mountain pines ;  
 The cloisters of a hill-girt plain ;  
 The front of life's embattled lines ;  
 A mound beside the heaving main.

These are the scenes: a boy appears ;  
 Set life's round dial in the sun,  
 Count the swift arc of seventy years,  
 His frame is dust; his task is done.

Yet pause upon the noontide hour,  
 Ere the declining sun has laid 30  
 His bleaching rays on manhood's power,  
 And look upon the mighty shade.

No gloom that stately shape can hide,  
 No change uncrown its brow; behold !

Dark, calm, large-fronted, lightning-eyed,  
Earth has no double from its mould!

Ere from the fields by valor won  
The battle-smoke had rolled away,  
And bared the blood-red setting sun,  
His eyes were opened on the day. 40

His land was but a shelving strip  
Black with the strife that made it free;  
He lived to see its banners dip  
Their fringes in the Western sea.

The boundless prairies learned his name,  
His words the mountain echoes knew.  
The Northern breezes swept his fame  
From icy lake to warm bayou.

In toil he lived; in peace he died;  
When life's full cycle was complete 50  
Put off his robes of power and pride,  
And laid them at his Master's feet.

His rest is by the storm-swept waves  
Whom life's wild tempests roughly tried,  
Whose heart was like the streaming caves  
Of ocean, throbbing at his side.

Death's cold white hand is like the snow  
Laid softly on the furrowed hill,  
It hides the broken seams below,  
And leaves the summit brighter still. 60

In vain the envious tongue upbraids;  
His name a nation's heart shall keep  
Till morning's latest sunlight fades  
On the blue tablet of the deep!

1855-56.

(1861.)

# FOR THE MEETING OF THE BURNS CLUB

1856

THE mountains glitter in the snow  
A thousand leagues asunder;  
Yet here, amid the banquet's glow,  
I hear their voice of thunder;  
Each giant's ice-bound goblet clinks;  
A flowing stream is summoned;  
Wachusett to Ben Nevis drinks;  
Monadnock to Ben Lomond!

Though years' have clipped the eagle's  
plume

That crowned the chieftain's bonnet, 10  
The sun still sees the heather bloom,  
The silver mists lie on it;  
With tartan kilt and philibeg,  
What stride was ever bolder  
Than his who showed the naked leg  
Beneath the plaided shoulder?

The echoes sleep on Cheviot's hills,  
That heard the bugles blowing  
When down their sides the crimson rills  
With mingled blood were flowing; 20  
The hunts where gallant hearts were  
game,  
The slashing on the border,  
The raid that swooped with sword and  
flame,  
Give place to 'law and order.'

Not while the rocking steeples reel  
With midnight tocsins ringing,  
Not while the crashing war-notes peal,  
God sets his poets singing;  
The bird is silent in the night,  
Or shrieks a cry of warning 30  
While fluttering round the beacon-light, —  
But hear him greet the morning!

The lark of Scotia's morning sky!  
Whose voice may sing his praises?  
With Heaven's own sunlight in his eye,  
He walked among the daisies,  
Till through the cloud of fortune's wrong  
He soared to fields of glory;  
But left his land her sweetest song  
And earth her saddest story. 40

'Tis not the forts the builder piles  
That chain the earth together;  
The wedded crowns, the sister isles,  
Would laugh at such a tether;  
The kindling thought, the throbbing words,  
That set the pulses beating,  
Are stronger than the myriad swords  
Of mighty armies meeting.

Thus while within the banquet glows,  
Without, the wild winds whistle, 50  
We drink a triple health, — the Rose,  
The Shamrock, and the Thistle!  
Their blended hues shall never fade  
Till War has hushed his cannon, —  
Close-twined as ocean-currents braid  
The Thames, the Clyde, the Shannon!

1856.

(1861.)



LATTER-DAY WARNINGS<sup>1</sup>

WHEN legislators keep the law,  
 When banks dispense with bolts and locks,  
 When berries — whortle, rasp, and straw —  
 Grow bigger *downwards* through the  
 box, —

When he that selleth house or land  
 Shows leak in roof or flaw in right,  
 When haberdashers choose the stand  
 Whose window hath the broadest light, —

When preachers tell us all they think,  
 And party leaders all they mean, — 10  
 When what we pay for, that we drink,  
 From real grape and coffee-bean, —

When lawyers take what they would give,  
 And doctors give what they would take, —  
 When city fathers eat to live,  
 Save when they fast for conscience'  
 sake, —

When one that hath a horse on sale  
 Shall bring his merit to the proof,  
 Without a lie for every nail  
 That holds the iron on the hoof, — 20

When in the usual place for rips  
 Our gloves are stitched with special care,  
 And guarded well the whalebone tips  
 Where first umbrellas need repair, —

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot  
 The power of suction to resist,  
 And claret-bottles harbor not  
 Such dimples as would hold your fist, —

When publishers no longer steal,  
 And pay for what they stole before, — 30  
 When the first locomotive's wheel  
 Rolls through the Hoosac Tunnel's  
 bore; —

Till then let Cumming blaze away,  
 And Miller's saints blow up the globe;  
 But when you see that blessed day,  
 Then order your ascension robe!

1857.

<sup>1</sup> I should have felt more nervous about the late comet, if I had thought the world was ripe. But it is very green yet, if I am not mistaken; and besides, there is a great deal of coal to use up, which I cannot bring myself to think was made for nothing. . . . (Holmes, introducing the poem, in the *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*.)

This and the six following poems first appeared in the *Autocrat* papers, in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS<sup>2</sup>

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
 Sails the unshadowed main, —  
 The venturous bark that flings  
 On the sweet summer wind its purple  
 wings

In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,  
 And coral reefs lie bare,  
 Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their  
 streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
 Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
 And every chambered cell,  
 Where its dim dreaming life was wont to  
 dwell,  
 As the frail tenant shaped his growing  
 shell,  
 Before thee lies revealed, —  
 Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt un-  
 sealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil  
 That spread his lustrous coil;  
 Still, as the spiral grew,  
 He left the past year's dwelling for the  
 new,  
 Stole with soft step its shining archway  
 through,  
 Built up its idle door, — 20  
 Stretched in his last-found home, and knew  
 the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought  
 by thee,  
 Child of the wandering sea,  
 Cast from her lap, forlorn!  
 From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
 Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!  
 While on mine ear it rings,  
 Through the deep caves of thought I hear  
 a voice that sings: —

Build thee more stately mansions, O my  
 soul,  
 As the swift seasons roll! 30  
 Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,

<sup>2</sup> Suggested by looking at a section of one of these chambered shells to which is given the name of Pearly Nautilus. . . . If you will look into Roget's *Bridgewater Treatise* you will find a figure of one of these shells and a section of it. The last will show you the series of enlarging compartments successively dwelt in by the animal that inhabits the shell, which is built in a widening spiral. (Holmes, in the *Autocrat*.)

Shut thee from heaven with a dome more  
vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's un-  
resting sea !

1858.

# THE LIVING TEMPLE<sup>1</sup>

NOT in the world of light alone,  
Where God has built his blazing throne,  
Nor yet alone in earth below,  
With belted seas that come and go,  
And endless isles of sunlit green,  
Is all thy Maker's glory seen:  
Look in upon thy wondrous frame, —  
Eternal wisdom still the same !

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves  
Flows murmuring through its hidden  
caves, 10  
Whose streams of brightening purple rush,  
Fired with a new and livelier blush,  
While all their burden of decay  
The ebbing current steals away,  
And red with Nature's flame they start  
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,  
Forever quivering o'er his task,  
While far and wide a crimson jet  
Leaps forth to fill the woven net 20  
Which in unnumbered crossing tides  
The flood of burning life divides,  
Then, kindling each decaying part,  
Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame  
Behold the outward moving frame,  
Its living marbles jointed strong  
With glistening band and silvery thong,  
And linked to reason's guiding reins  
By myriad rings in trembling chains, 30  
Each graven with the threaded zone  
Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white  
Is braided out of seven-hued light,

<sup>1</sup> Having read our company so much of the Professor's talk about age and other subjects connected with physical life, I took the next Sunday morning to repeat to them the following poem of his, which I have had by me for some time. He calls it — I suppose for his professional friends — 'The Anatomist's Hymn,' but I shall name it 'The Living Temple.' (Holmes, introducing the poem, in the *Autocrat*.)

Yet in those lucid globes no ray  
By any chance shall break astray.  
Hark how the rolling surge of sound,  
Arches and spirals circling round,  
Wakes the hushed spirit through thine  
ear  
With music it is heaven to hear. 40

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds  
All thought in its mysterious folds;  
That feels sensation's faintest thrill,  
And flashes forth the sovereign will;  
Think on the stormy world that dwells  
Locked in its dim and clustering cells !  
The lightning gleams of power it sheds  
Along its hollow glassy threads !

O Father ! grant thy love divine  
To make these mystic temples thine ! 50  
When wasting age and wearying strife  
Have sapped the leaning walls of life,  
When darkness gathers over all,  
And the last tottering pillars fall,  
Take the poor dust thy mercy warms,  
And mould it into heavenly forms !  
1858.

# THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

OR, THE WONDERFUL 'ONE-HOSS SHAY'

A LOGICAL STORY

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss  
shay,  
That was built in such a logical way  
It ran a hundred years to a day,  
And then, of a sudden, it — ah, but stay,  
I'll tell you what happened without delay,  
Scaring the parson into fits,  
Frightening people out of their wits, —  
Have you ever heard of that, I say ?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.  
*Georgius Secundus* was then alive, — 10  
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.  
That was the year when Lisbon-town  
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,  
And Braddock's army was done so brown,  
Left without a scalp to its crown.  
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day  
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,  
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot, —

In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill, 20  
 In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,  
 In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace, — lurking  
     still,  
 Find it somewhere you must and will, —  
 Above or below, or within or without, —  
 And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,  
 That a chaise *breaks down*, but does n't wear  
     out.

But the Deacon swore (as deacons do,  
 With an 'I dew vum,' or an 'I tell yeou')  
 He would build one shay to beat the taown  
 'N' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun'; 30  
 It should be so built that it *could n'* break  
     daown:

'Fur,' said the Deacon, 't's mighty plain  
 Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the  
     strain;

'N' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,  
     Is only jest  
 T' make that place uz strong uz the rest.'

So the Deacon inquired of the village  
     folk

Where he could find the strongest oak,  
 That could n't be split nor bent nor broke, —  
 That was for spokes and floor and sills; 40  
 He sent for lancewood to make the thills;  
 The crossbars were ash, from the straight-  
     est trees,

The panels of white-wood, that cuts like  
     cheese,

But lasts like iron for things like these;  
 The hubs of logs from the 'Settler's el-  
     lum,' —

Last of its timber, — they could n't sell 'em,  
 Never an axe had seen their chips,  
 And the wedges flew from between their  
     lips,

Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;  
 Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw, 50

Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,  
 Steel of the finest, bright and blue;

Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;  
 Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide  
 Found in the pit when the tanner died.

That was the way he 'put her through.'  
 'There!' said the Deacon, 'naow she 'll  
     dew!'

Do! I tell you, I rather guess  
 She was a wonder, and nothing less!  
 Colts grew horses, beards turned gray, 60  
 Deacon and deaconess dropped away,

Children and grandchildren — where were  
     they?

But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay  
 As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED; — it came and found  
 The Deacon's masterpiece strong and  
     sound.

Eighteen hundred increased by ten; —  
 'Hahnsum kerridge' they called it then.  
 Eighteen hundred and twenty came; —  
 Running as usual; much the same. 70  
 Thirty and forty at last arrive,  
 And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here  
 Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year  
 Without both feeling and looking queer.  
 In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,  
 So far as I know, but a tree and truth.  
 (This is a moral that runs at large;  
 Take it. — You're welcome. — No extra  
     charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER, — the earthquake-  
     day, — 80

There are traces of age in the one-hoss  
     shay,

A general flavor of mild decay,  
 But nothing local, as one may say.  
 There could n't be, — for the Deacon's art  
 Had made it so like in every part  
 That there was n't a chance for one to  
     start.

For the wheels were just as strong as the  
     thills,

And the floor was just as strong as the  
     sills,

And the panels just as strong as the floor,  
 And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,  
 And the back crossbar as strong as the  
     fore, 90

And spring and axle and hub *encore*.  
 And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt  
 In another hour it will be *worn out*!

First of November, 'Fifty-five!  
 This morning the parson takes a drive.  
 Now, small boys, get out of the way!  
 Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,  
 Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.  
 'Huddup!' said the parson. — Off went  
     they. 100

The parson was working his Sunday's  
     text, —

**H**ad got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed  
**A**t what the — Moses — was coming next.  
**A**ll at once the horse stood still,  
**C**lose by the meet'n'-house on the hill.  
**F**irst a shiver, and then a thrill,  
**T**hen something decidedly like a spill, —  
**A**nd the parson was sitting upon a rock,  
**A**t half past nine by the meet'n'-house  
 clock, —  
**J**ust the hour of the Earthquake shock ! 110  
**W**hat do you think the parson found,  
**W**hen he got up and stared around ?  
**T**he poor old chaise in a heap or mound,  
**A**s if it had been to the mill and ground !  
**Y**ou see, of course, if you're not a dunce,  
**H**ow it went to pieces all at once, —  
**A**ll at once, and nothing first, —  
**J**ust as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay  
 Logic is logic. That's all I say. 120  
 1858.

### CONTENTMENT

'Man wants but little here below.'

**L**ITTLE I ask; my wants are few;  
 I only wish a hut of stone  
 (A *very plain* brown stone will do)  
 That I may call my own; —  
 And close at hand is such a one,  
 In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;  
 Three courses are as good as ten; —  
 If Nature can subsist on three,  
 Thank Heaven for three. Amen ! 10  
 I always thought cold victual nice; —  
 My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land; —  
 Give me a mortgage here and there, —  
 Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,  
 Or trifling railroad share, —  
 I only ask that Fortune send  
 A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,  
 And titles are but empty names; 20  
 I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo, —  
 But only near St. James;  
 I'm very sure I should not care  
 To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles; 't is a sin  
 To care for such unfruitful things; —

One good-sized diamond in a pin, —  
 Some, *not so large*, in rings, —  
 A ruby, and a pearl, or so,  
 Will do for me; — I laugh at show. 30

My dame should dress in cheap attire  
 (Good, heavy silks are never dear); —  
 I own perhaps I *might* desire  
 Some shawls of true Cashmere, —  
 Some marrowy crapes of China silk,  
 Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive  
 So fast that folks must stop and stare;  
 An easy gait — two forty-five —  
 Suits me; I do not care; — 40  
 Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,  
 Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own  
 Titians and Raphaels three or four, —  
 I love so much their style and tone,  
 One Turner, and no more  
 (A landscape, — foreground golden dirt, —  
 The sunshine painted with a squirt).

Of books but few, — some fifty score  
 For daily use, and bound for wear; 50  
 The rest upon an upper floor; —  
 Some *little* luxury *there*  
 Of red morocco's gilded gleam  
 And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems, — such things as  
 these,  
 Which others often show for pride,  
 I value for their power to please,  
 And selfish churls deride; —  
 One Stradivarius, I confess,  
 Two Meerschaums, I would fain possess. 60

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn,  
 Nor ape the glittering upstart fool; —  
 Shall not carved tables serve my turn,  
 But *all* must be of buhl ?  
 Give grasping pomp its double share, —  
 I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,  
 Nor long for Midas' golden touch;  
 If Heaven more generous gifts deny,  
 I shall not miss them *much*, — 70  
 Too grateful for the blessing lent  
 Of simple tastes and mind content !

1858.

## PARSON TURELL'S LEGACY

OR, THE PRESIDENT'S OLD ARM-CHAIR

## A MATHEMATICAL STORY

FACTS respecting an old arm-chair,  
At Cambridge. Is kept in the College  
there.

Seems but little the worse for wear.  
That's remarkable when I say  
It was old in President Holyoke's day.  
(One of his boys, perhaps you know,  
Died, at one hundred, years ago.)  
He took lodgings for rain or shine  
Under green bed-clothes in '69.

Know old Cambridge? Hope you do. — 10  
Born there? Don't say so! I was, too.  
(Born in a house with a gambrel-roof, —  
Standing still, if you must have proof. —  
'Gambrel? — Gambrel?' — Let me beg  
You'll look at a horse's hinder leg, —  
First great angle above the hoof, —  
That's the gambrel: hence gambrel-  
roof.)

Nicest place that ever was seen, —  
Colleges red and Common green,  
Sidewalks brownish with trees between. 20  
Sweetest spot beneath the skies  
When the canker-worms don't rise, —  
When the dust, that sometimes flies  
Into your mouth and ears and eyes,  
In a quiet slumber lies,  
Not in the shape of unbaked pies  
Such as barefoot children prize.

A kind of harbor it seems to be,  
Facing the flow of a boundless sea.  
Rows of gray old Tutors stand 30  
Ranged like rocks above the sand;  
Rolling beneath them, soft and green,  
Breaks the tide of bright sixteen, —  
One wave, two waves, three waves, four, —  
Sliding up the sparkling floor:  
Then it ebbs to flow no more,  
Wandering off from shore to shore  
With its freight of golden ore!  
Pleasant place for boys to play; —  
Better keep your girls away; 40  
Hearts get rolled as pebbles do  
Which countless fingering waves pursue,  
And every classic beach is strown  
With heart-shaped pebbles of blood-red  
stone.

But this is neither here nor there;  
I'm talking about an old arm-chair.  
You've heard, no doubt, of PARSON TU-  
RELL?

Over at Medford he used to dwell;  
Married one of the Mathers' folk;  
Got with his wife a chair of oak, — 50  
Funny old chair with seat like wedge,  
Sharp behind and broad front edge, —  
One of the oddest of human things,  
Turned all over with knobs and rings, —  
But heavy, and wide, and deep, and  
grand, —

Fit for the worthies of the land, —  
Chief Justice Sewall a cause to try in,  
Or Cotton Mather to sit — and lie —  
in.

Parson Turell bequeathed the same  
To a certain student, — SMITH by name; 60  
These were the terms, as we are told:  
'Saide Smith saide Chaire to have and  
holde;  
When he doth graduate, then to passe  
To y' oldest Youth in y' Senior Classe.  
On payment of' — (naming a certain  
sum) —

'By him to whom y' Chaire shall come;  
He to y' oldest Senior next,  
And soe forever' (thus runs the text), —  
'But one Crown lesse than he gave to  
claime,  
That being his Debte for use of same.' 70

Smith transferred it to one of the BROWNS,  
And took his money, — five silver crowns.  
Brown delivered it up to MOORE,  
Who paid, it is plain, not five, but four.  
Moore made over the chair to LEE,  
Who gave him crowns of silver three.  
Lee conveyed it unto DREW,  
And now the payment, of course, was two.  
Drew gave up the chair to DUNN, —  
All he got, as you see, was one. 80  
Dunn released the chair to HALL,  
And got by the bargain no crown at all.

And now it passed to a second BROWN,  
Who took it and likewise claimed a crown.  
When Brown conveyed it unto WARE,  
Having had one crown, to make it fair,  
He paid him two crowns to take the chair;  
And Ware, being honest (as all Wares be),  
He paid one POTTER, who took it, three.  
Four got ROBINSON; five got DIX; 90  
JOHNSON primus demanded six;

And so the sum kept gathering still  
Till after the battle of Bunker's Hill.

When paper money became so cheap,  
Folks would n't count it, but said 'a heap,'  
A certain RICHARDS, — the books de-  
clare

(A. M. in '90? I've looked with care  
Through the Triennial, — *name not there*), —  
This person, Richards, was offered then  
Eightscore pounds, but would have ten; <sup>100</sup>  
Nine, I think, was the sum he took, —  
Not quite certain, — but see the book.  
By and by the wars were still,  
But nothing had altered the Parson's will.  
The old arm-chair was solid yet,  
But saddled with such a monstrous debt!  
Things grew quite too bad to bear,  
Paying such sums to get rid of the chair!  
But dead men's fingers hold awful tight,  
And there was the will in black and white,  
Plain enough for a child to spell. <sup>111</sup>  
What should be done no man could tell,  
For the chair was a kind of nightmare  
curse,  
And every season but made it worse.

As a last resort, to clear the doubt,  
They got old GOVERNOR HANCOCK out.  
The Governor came with his Lighthorse  
Troop  
And his mounted truckmen, all cock-a-  
hoop;  
Halberds glittered and colors flew,  
French horns whinnied and trumpets blew,  
The yellow fifes whistled between their  
teeth, <sup>121</sup>  
And the bumble-bee bass-drums boomed  
beneath;  
So he rode with all his band,  
Till the President met him, cap in hand.  
The Governor 'hefted' the crowns, and  
said, —  
'A will is a will, and the Parson's dead.'  
The Governor hefted the crowns. Said  
he, —  
'There is your p'int. And here's my fee.  
These are the terms you must fulfil, —  
On such conditions I BREAK THE WILL!', <sup>30</sup>  
The Governor mentioned what these should  
be.  
(Just wait a minute and then you'll see.)  
The President prayed. Then all was still,  
And the Governor rose and BROKE THE  
WILL!

'About those conditions?' Well, now you  
go

And do as I tell you, and then you'll know.  
Once a year, on Commencement day,  
If you'll only take the pains to stay,  
You'll see the President in the CHAIR,  
Likewise the Governor sitting there. <sup>140</sup>  
The President rises; both old and young  
May hear his speech in a foreign tongue,  
The meaning whereof, as lawyers swear,  
Is this: Can I keep this old arm-chair?  
And then his Excellency bows,  
As much as to say that he allows.  
The Vice-Gub. next is called by name;  
He bows like t' other, which means the  
same.

And all the officers round 'em bow,  
As much as to say that *they* allow. <sup>150</sup>  
And a lot of parchments about the chair  
Are handed to witnesses then and there,  
And then the lawyers hold it clear  
That the chair is safe for another year.

God bless you, Gentlemen! Learn to give  
Money to colleges while you live.  
Don't be silly and think you'll try  
To bother the colleges, when you die,  
With codicil this, and codicil that,  
That Knowledge may starve while Law  
grows fat; <sup>160</sup>  
For there never was pitcher that would n't  
spill,  
And there's always a flaw in a donkey's  
will!

1858.

## THE VOICELESS

WE count the broken lyres that rest  
Where the sweet wailing singers slum-  
ber,  
But o'er their silent sister's breast  
The wild-flowers who will stoop to num-  
ber?  
A few can touch the magic string,  
And noisy Fame is proud to win them: —  
Alas for those that never sing,  
But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone  
Whose song has told their hearts' sad  
story, —  
Weep for the voiceless, who have known  
The cross without the crown of glory!



Not where Leucadian breezes sweep  
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,  
But where the glistening night-dews weep  
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign  
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,  
Till Death pours out his longed-for wine  
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing  
presses, —

If singing breath or echoing chord  
To every hidden pang were given,  
What endless melodies were poured,  
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven !

1858.

### FOR THE BURNS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

JANUARY 25, 1859

His birthday. — Nay, we need not speak  
The name each heart is beating, —  
Each glistening eye and flushing cheek  
In light and flame repeating !

We come in one tumultuous tide, —  
One surge of wild emotion, —  
As crowding through the Frith of Clyde  
Rolls in the Western Ocean;

As when yon cloudless, quartered moon  
Hangs o'er each storied river, 10  
The swelling breasts of Ayr and Doon  
With sea-green wavelets quiver.

The century shrivels like a scroll, —  
The past becomes the present, —  
And face to face, and soul to soul,  
We greet the monarch-peasant.

While Shenstone strained in feeble flights  
With Corydon and Phillis, —  
While Wolfe was climbing Abraham's  
heights  
To snatch the Bourbon lilies, — 20

Who heard the wailing infant's cry,  
The babe beneath the sheeling,  
Whose song to-night in every sky  
Will shake earth's starry ceiling, —

Whose passion-breathing voice ascends  
And floats like incense o'er us,  
Whose ringing lay of friendship blends  
With labor's anvil chorus ?

We love him, not for sweetest song,  
Though never tone so tender; 30  
We love him, even in his wrong, —  
His wasteful self-surrender.

We praise him, not for gifts divine, —  
His Muse was born of woman, —  
His manhood breathes in every line, —  
Was ever heart more human ?

We love him, praise him, just for this:  
In every form and feature,  
Through wealth and want, through woe  
and bliss,  
He saw his fellow-creature ! 40

No soul could sink beneath his love, —  
Not even angel blasted;  
No mortal power could soar above  
The pride that all outlasted !

Ay ! Heaven had set one living man  
Beyond the pedant's tether, —  
His virtues, frailties, He may scan,  
Who weighs them all together !

I fling my pebble on the cairn  
Of him, though dead, undying; 50  
Sweet Nature's nursling, bonniest bairn  
Beneath her daisies lying.

The waning suns, the wasting globe,  
Shall spare the minstrel's story, —  
The centuries weave his purple robe,  
The mountain-mist of glory !

1859.

(1861.)

### THE BOYS<sup>1</sup>

HAS there any old fellow got mixed with  
the boys ?  
If there has, take him out, without making  
a noise.

<sup>1</sup> For nearly forty years, from 1851 to 1889, Holmes never failed to bring a poem to the annual reunion of his college class. These poems, merely 'occasional,' and local as they were in origin, form a section in his collected works which is perhaps the most important, and, except for his best humorous narratives and his two finest lyrics, the most likely to survive; for, with all Holmes's characteristic wit and humor, they celebrate feelings that are broadly and typically American — class loyalty and college loyalty, and growing out of these, the loyalty of man's enduring friendship, and loyalty to country.

The 'famous class of '29' counted among its members a chief-justice of Massachusetts, George T. Bigelow (the 'Judge' of this poem); a justice of the United



Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!  
Old Time is a liar! We're twenty to-night!

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more?  
He's tipsy,—young jackanapes!—show him the door!  
'Gray temples at twenty?'—Yes! *white* if we please;  
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!  
Look close,—you will see not a sign of a flake!

We want some new garlands for those we have shed,—  
And these are white roses in place of the red.

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,  
Of talking (in public) as if we were old:—  
That boy we call 'Doctor,' and this we call 'Judge';  
It's a neat little fiction,—of course it's all fudge.

That fellow's the 'Speaker,'<sup>1</sup>—the one on the right;  
'Mr. Mayor,'<sup>2</sup> my young one, how are you to-night?  
That's our 'Member of Congress,'<sup>3</sup> we say when we chaff;  
There's the 'Reverend' What's his name?  
—don't make me laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look  
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,  
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was true!  
So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

States Supreme Court, B. R. Curtis (the 'boy with the three-decker brain'); the great preacher, James Freeman Clarke; Professor Benjamin Peirce ('that boy with the grave mathematical look'); and the author of 'America,' S. F. Smith. For a full list of members of the class, see the Cambridge Edition of Holmes's *Poetical Works*, p. 340.

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Francis B. Crowninshield, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

<sup>2</sup> G. W. Richardson, of Worcester, Massachusetts.

<sup>3</sup> Hon. George L. Davis.

There's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain,  
That could harness a team with a logical chain;  
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,  
We called him 'The Justice,' but now he's 'The Squire.'

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith,—  
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;  
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,—  
Just read on his medal, 'My country,' 'of thee!'

You hear that boy laughing?—You think he's all fun;  
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;  
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,  
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we're boys,—always playing with tongue or with pen,—  
And I sometimes have asked,—Shall we ever be men?  
Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,  
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!  
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!  
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,  
Dear Father, take care of thy children, THE BOYS!

1859.

1859.

## AT A MEETING OF FRIENDS

AUGUST 29, 1859<sup>4</sup>

I REMEMBER—why, yes! God bless me!  
and was it so long ago?  
I fear I'm growing forgetful, as old folks do, you know;

<sup>4</sup> Holmes's fiftieth birthday.

It must have been in 'forty — I would say  
'thirty-nine —  
We talked this matter over, I and a friend  
of mine.

He said, 'Well now, old fellow, I'm  
thinking that you and I,  
If we act like other people, shall be older  
by and by;  
What though the bright blue ocean is  
smooth as a pond can be,  
There is always a line of breakers to fringe  
the broadest sea.

'We're taking it mighty easy, but that is  
nothing strange,  
For up to the age of thirty we spend our  
years like change;  
But creeping up towards the forties, as fast  
as the old years fill,  
And Time steps in for payment, we seem to  
change a bill.'

'I know it,' I said, 'old fellow; you speak  
the solemn truth;  
A man can't live to a hundred and likewise  
keep his youth;  
But what if the ten years coming shall  
silver-streak my hair,  
You know I shall then be 'forty; of course  
I shall not care.

'At forty a man grows heavy and tired of  
fun and noise;  
Leaves dress to the five-and-twenties and  
love to the silly boys;  
No foppish tricks at forty, no pinching of  
waists and toes,  
But high-low shoes and flannels and good  
thick worsted hose.'

But one fine August morning I found my-  
self awake:  
My birthday: — By Jove, I'm forty! Yes,  
forty and no mistake!  
Why, this is the very milestone, I think I  
used to hold,  
That when a fellow had come to, a fellow  
would then be old!

But that is the young folks' nonsense;  
they're full of their foolish stuff;  
A man's in his prime at forty, — I see that  
plain enough;

At *fifty* a man is wrinkled, and *may* be bald  
or gray;  
I call men old at fifty, in spite of all they  
say.

At last comes another August with mist  
and rain and shine;  
Its mornings are slowly counted and creep  
to twenty-nine,  
And when on the western summits the fad-  
ing light appears,  
It touches with rosy fingers the last of my  
fifty years.

There have been both men and women  
whose hearts were firm and bold,  
But there never was one of fifty that loved  
to say 'I'm old;'  
So any elderly person that strives to shirk  
his years,  
Make him stand up at a table and try him  
by his peers.

Now here I stand at fifty, my jury gathered  
round;  
Sprinkled with dust of silver, but not yet  
silver-crowned,  
Ready to meet your verdict, waiting to hear  
it told;  
Guilty of fifty summers; speak! Is the  
verdict *old*?

No! say that his hearing fails him; say  
that his sight grows dim;  
Say that he's getting wrinkled and weak in  
back and limb,  
Losing his wits and temper, but pleading,  
to make amends,  
The youth of his fifty summers he finds in  
his twenty friends.

1859.

(1877.)

### THE TWO STREAMS<sup>1</sup>

BEHOLD the rocky wall  
That down its sloping sides  
Pours the swift rain-drops, blending, as  
they fall,  
In rushing river-tides!

Yon stream, whose sources run  
Turned by a pebble's edge,

<sup>1</sup> This and the three following poems are from the  
*Professor at the Breakfast Table*. 'The Boys' also is  
included in that volume.

**Is Athabasca, rolling toward the sun  
Through the cleft mountain-ledge.**

**The slender rill had strayed,  
But for the slanting stone,  
To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid  
Of foam-flecked Oregon.**

**So from the heights of Will  
Life's parting stream descends,  
And, as a moment turns its slender rill,  
Each widening torrent bends, —**

**From the same cradle's side,  
From the same mother's knee, —  
One to long darkness and the frozen tide,  
One to the Peaceful Sea !**

1859.

### UNDER THE VIOLETS

**Her hands are cold; her face is white;  
No more her pulses come and go;  
Her eyes are shut to life and light; —  
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,  
And lay her where the violets blow.**

**But not beneath a graven stone,  
To plead for tears with alien eyes;  
A slender cross of wood alone  
Shall say, that here a maiden lies  
In peace beneath the peaceful skies. 10**

**And gray old trees of hugest limb  
Shall wheel their circling shadows round  
To make the scorching sunlight dim  
That drinks the greenness from the  
ground,  
And drop their dead leaves on her mound.**

**When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,  
And through their leaves the robins call,  
And, ripening in the autumn sun,  
The acorns and the chestnuts fall,  
Doubt not that she will heed them all. 20**

**For her the morning choir shall sing  
Its matins from the branches high,  
And every minstrel-voice of Spring,  
That trills beneath the April sky,  
Shall greet her with its earliest cry.**

**When, turning round their dial-track,  
Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,  
Her little mourners, clad in black,**

**The crickets, sliding through the grass,  
Shall pipe for her an evening mass. 30**

**At last the rootlets of the trees  
Shall find the prison where she lies,  
And bear the buried dust they seize  
In leaves and blossoms to the skies.  
So may the soul that warmed it rise !**

**If any, born of kindlier blood,  
Should ask, What maiden lies below ?  
Say only this: A tender bud,  
That tried to blossom in the snow,  
Lies withered where the violets blow. 40**

1859.

### HYMN OF TRUST

**O Love Divine, that stooped to share  
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,  
On Thee we cast each earth-born care,  
We smile at pain while Thou art near !**

**Though long the weary way we tread,  
And sorrow crown each lingering year,  
No path we shun, no darkness dread,  
Our hearts still whispering, Thou art  
near !**

**When drooping pleasure turns to grief,  
And trembling faith is changed to fear,  
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,  
Shall softly tell us, Thou art near !**

**On Thee we fling our burdening woe,  
O Love Divine, forever dear,  
Content to suffer while we know,  
Living and dying, Thou art near !**

1859.

### A SUN-DAY HYMN

**LORD of all being ! throned afar,  
Thy glory flames from sun and star;  
Centre and soul of every sphere,  
Yet to each loving heart how near !**

**Sun of our life, thy quickening ray  
Sheds on our path the glow of day;  
Star of our hope, thy softened light  
Cheers the long watches of the night.**

**Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;  
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;**

Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;  
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine !

Lord of all life, below, above,  
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is  
love,  
Before thy ever-blazing throne  
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,  
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,  
Till all thy living altars claim  
One holy light, one heavenly flame !

1859.

### PROLOGUE TO 'SONGS IN MANY KEYS'

THE piping of our slender, peaceful reeds  
Whispers uncared for while the trumpets  
bray;  
Song is thin air; our hearts' exulting play  
Beats time but to the tread of marching  
deeds,  
Following the mighty van that Freedom  
leads,  
Her glorious standard flaming to the day !  
The crimsoned pavement where a hero  
bleeds  
Breathes nobler lessons than the poet's lay.  
Strong arms, broad breasts, brave hearts,  
are better worth  
Than strains that sing the ravished echoes  
dumb.  
Hark ! 't is the loud reverberating drum  
Rolls o'er the prairied West, the rock-bound  
North:  
The myriad-handed Future stretches forth  
Its shadowy palms. Behold, we come, —  
we come !

Turn o'er these idle leaves. Such toys as  
these  
Were not unsought for, as, in languid  
dreams,  
We lay beside our lotus-feeding streams,  
And nursed our fancies in forgetful ease.  
It matters little if they pall or please,  
Dropping untimely, while the sudden  
gleams  
Glare from the mustering clouds whose  
blackness seems  
Too swollen to hold its lightning from the  
trees.

Yet, in some lull of passion, when at last  
These calm revolving moons that come and  
go —  
Turning our months to years, they creep so  
slow —  
Have brought us rest, the not unwelcome  
past  
May flutter to thee through these leaflets,  
cast  
On the wild winds that all around us blow.  
1861. 1861.

### BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE

MARCH 25, 1861

SHE has gone, — she has left us in passion  
and pride, —  
Our stormy-browed sister, so long at our  
side !  
She has torn her own star from our firma-  
ment's glow,  
And turned on her brother the face of a foe !  
  
Oh, Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,  
We can never forget that our hearts have  
been one, —  
Our foreheads both sprinkled in Liberty's  
name,  
From the fountain of blood with the finger  
of flame !  
  
You were always too ready to fire at a  
touch;  
But we said, 'She is hasty, — she does not  
mean much.' 10  
We have scowled, when you uttered some  
turbulent threat;  
But Friendship still whispered, 'Forgive  
and forget !'

Has our love all died out ? Have its altars  
grown cold ?  
Has the curse come at last which the fathers  
foretold ?  
Then Nature must teach us the strength of  
the chain  
That her petulant children would sever in  
vain.  
  
They may fight till the buzzards are gorged  
with their spoil,  
Till the harvest grows black as it rots in  
the soil,

**Till the wolves and the catamounts troop**  
**from their caves,**  
**And the shark tracks the pirate, the lord of**  
**the waves:** 20

**In vain is the strife ! When its fury is past,**  
**Their fortunes must flow in one channel at**  
**last,**  
**As the torrents that rush from the moun-**  
**tains of snow**  
**Roll mingled in peace through the valleys**  
**below.**

**Our Union is river, lake, ocean, and sky:**  
**Man breaks not the medal, when God cuts**  
**the die !**  
**Though darkened with sulphur, though**  
**cloven with steel,**  
**The blue arch will brighten, the waters will**  
**heal !**

**Oh, Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,**  
**There are battles with Fate that can never**  
**be won !** 30  
**The star-flowering banner must never be**  
**furled,**  
**For its blossoms of light are the hope of**  
**the world !**

**Go, then, our rash sister ! afar and aloof,**  
**Run wild in the sunshine away from our**  
**roof;**  
**But when your heart aches and your feet**  
**have grown sore,**  
**Remember the pathway that leads to our**  
**door !**

*March, 1861.*

*May, 1861.*

### PARTING HYMN

'DUNDEE'

**FATHER of Mercies, Heavenly Friend,**  
**We seek thy gracious throne;**  
**To Thee our faltering prayers ascend,**  
**Our fainting hearts are known !**

**From blasts that chill, from suns that**  
**smite,**  
**From every plague that harms;**  
**In camp and march, in siege and fight,**  
**Protect our men-at-arms !**

**Though from our darkened lives they take**  
**What makes our life most dear,**

**We yield them for their country's sake**  
**With no relenting tear.**

**Our blood their flowing veins will shed,**  
**Their wounds our breasts will share;**  
**Oh, save us from the woes we dread,**  
**Or grant us strength to bear !**

**Let each unhallowed cause that brings**  
**The stern destroyer cease,**  
**Thy flaming angel fold his wings,**  
**And seraphs whisper Peace !**

**Thine are the sceptre and the sword,**  
**Stretch forth thy mighty hand, —**  
**Reign Thou our kingless nation's Lord,**  
**Rule Thou our throneless land !**

*1861.*

*August, 1861.*

### UNION AND LIBERTY

**FLAG of the heroes who left us their glory,**  
**Borne through their battle-fields' thun-**  
**der and flame,**  
**Blazoned in song and illumined in story,**  
**Wave o'er us all who inherit their**  
**fame !**

**Up with our banner bright,**  
**Sprinkled with starry light,**  
**Spread its fair emblems from mountain**  
**to shore,**

**While through the sounding sky**  
**Loud rings the Nation's cry, —**  
**UNION AND LIBERTY ! ONE EVER-**  
**MORE !** 10

**Light of our firmament, guide of our Na-**  
**tion,**  
**Pride of her children, and honored**  
**afar,**

**Let the wide beams of thy full constella-**  
**tion**  
**Scatter each cloud that would darken a**  
**star !**

**Up with our banner bright, etc.**

**Empire unsceptred ! what foe shall assail**  
**thee,**

**Bearing the standard of Liberty's van ?**  
**Think not the God of thy fathers shall fail**  
**thee,**

**Striving with men for the birthright of**  
**man !**

**Up with our banner bright, etc.** 20

Yet if, by madness and treachery blighted,  
 Dawns the dark hour when the sword  
 thou must draw,  
 Then with the arms of thy millions united,  
 Smite the bold traitors to Freedom and  
 Law!  
 Up with our banner bright, etc.

Lord of the Universe! shield us and guide  
 us,  
 Trusting Thee always, through shadow  
 and sun!  
 Thou hast united us, who shall divide us?  
 Keep us, oh keep us the MANY IN ONE!  
 Up with our banner bright, 30  
 Sprinkled with starry light,  
 Spread its fair emblems from mountain  
 to shore,  
 While through the sounding sky  
 Loud rings the Nation's cry, —  
 UNION AND LIBERTY! ONE EVER-  
 MORE!

1861.

December, 1861.

J. D. R.<sup>1</sup>

1862

THE friends that are, and friends that were,  
 What shallow waves divide!  
 I miss the form for many a year  
 Still seated at my side.

I miss him, yet I feel him still  
 Amidst our faithful band,  
 As if not death itself could chill  
 The warmth of friendship's hand.

His story other lips may tell, —  
 For me the veil is drawn;  
 I only know he loved me well,  
 He loved me — and is gone!

1862.

1862.

TO MY READERS<sup>2</sup>

NAY, blame me not; I might have spared  
 Your patience many a trivial verse,  
 Yet these my earlier welcome shared,  
 So, let the better shield the worse.

<sup>1</sup> James D. Russell, a classmate of Holmes.<sup>2</sup> Written as a prologue to the collected edition of Holmes's poems published in 1862.

And some might say, 'Those ruder songs  
 Had freshness which the new have lost;  
 To spring the opening leaf belongs,  
 The chestnut-burs await the frost.'

When those I wrote, my locks were brown,  
 When these I write — ah, well-a-day! 10  
 The autumn thistle's silvery down  
 Is not the purple bloom of May!

Go, little book, whose pages hold  
 Those garnered years in loving trust;  
 How long before your blue and gold  
 Shall fade and whiten in the dust?

O sexton of the alcoved tomb,  
 Where souls in leathern cerements lie,  
 Tell me each living poet's doom!  
 How long before his book shall die? 20

It matters little, soon or late,  
 A day, a month, a year, an age, —  
 I read oblivion in its date,  
 And Finis on its title-page.

Before we sighed, our griefs were told;  
 Before we smiled, our joys were sung;  
 And all our passions shaped of old  
 In accents lost to mortal tongue.

In vain a fresher mould we seek, —  
 Can all the varied phrases tell 30  
 That Babel's wandering children speak  
 How thrushes sing or lilacs smell?

Caged in the poet's lonely heart,  
 Love wastes unheard its tenderest tone;  
 The soul that sings must dwell apart,  
 Its inward melodies unknown.

Deal gently with us, ye who read!  
 Our largest hope is unfulfilled, —  
 The promise still outruns the deed, —  
 The tower, but not the spire, we build. 40

Our whitest pearl we never find;  
 Our ripest fruit we never reach;  
 The flowering moments of the mind  
 Drop half their petals in our speech.

These are my blossoms; if they wear  
 One streak of morn or evening's glow,  
 Accept them; but to me more fair  
 The buds of song that never blow.

1862.

1862.

VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP  
UNION<sup>1</sup>

1862

**'T** is midnight: through my troubled  
dream

Loud wails the tempest's cry;  
Before the gale, with tattered sail,  
A ship goes plunging by.  
What name? Where bound? — The rocks  
around

Repeat the loud halloo.  
— The good ship Union, Southward bound:  
God help her and her crew!

And is the old flag flying still  
That o'er your fathers flew, 10  
With bands of white and rosy light,  
And field of starry blue?  
— Ay! look aloft! its folds full oft  
Have braved the roaring blast,  
And still shall fly when from the sky  
This black typhoon has past!

Speak, pilot of the storm-tost bark!  
May I thy peril share?  
— O landsman, there are fearful seas  
The brave alone may dare! 20  
— Nay, ruler of the rebel deep,  
What matters wind or wave?  
The rocks that wreck your reeling deck  
Will leave me naught to save!

O landsman, art thou false or true?  
What sign hast thou to show?  
— The crimson stains from loyal veins  
That hold my heart-blood's flow!  
— Enough! what more shall honor claim?  
I know the sacred sign; 30  
Above thy head our flag shall spread,  
Our ocean path be thine!

The bark sails on; the Pilgrim's Cape  
Lies low along her lee,  
Whose headland crooks its anchor-flukes  
To lock the shore and sea.  
No treason here! it cost too dear  
To win this barren realm!  
And true and free the hands must be  
That hold the whaler's helm! 40

Still on! Manhattan's narrowing bay  
No rebel cruiser scars;

<sup>1</sup> Written for a reunion of the class of '29.

Her waters feel no pirate's keel  
That flaunts the fallen stars!  
— But watch the light on yonder height, —  
Ay, pilot, have a care!  
Some lingering cloud in mist may shroud  
The capes of Delaware!

Say, pilot, what this fort may be,  
Whose sentinels look down 50  
From moated walls that show the sea  
Their deep embrasures' frown?  
The Rebel host claims all the coast,  
But these are friends, we know,  
Whose footprints spoil the 'sacred soil,'  
And this is? — Fort Monroe!

The breakers roar, — how bears the shore?  
— The traitorous wreckers' hands  
Have quenched the blaze that poured its  
rays  
Along the Hatteras sands. 60  
— Ha! say not so! I see its glow!  
Again the shoals display  
The beacon light that shines by night,  
The Union Stars by day!

The good ship flies to milder skies,  
The wave more gently flows,  
The softening breeze wafts o'er the seas  
The breath of Beaufort's rose.  
What fold is this the sweet winds kiss,  
Fair-striped and many-starred, 70  
Whose shadow palls these orphaned walls,  
The twins of Beauregard?

What! heard you not Port Royal's doom?  
How the black war-ships came  
And turned the Beaufort roses' bloom  
To redder wreaths of flame?  
How from Rebellion's broken reed  
We saw his emblem fall,  
As soon his cursed poison-weed  
Shall drop from Sumter's wall? 80

On! on! Pulaski's iron hail  
Falls harmless on Tybee!  
The good ship feels the freshening gales,  
She strikes the open sea;  
She rounds the point, she threads the keys  
That guard the Land of Flowers,  
And rides at last where firm and fast  
Her own Gibraltar towers!

The good ship Union's voyage is o'er,  
At anchor safe she swings, 90



And loud and clear with cheer on cheer  
 Her joyous welcome rings:  
 Hurrah ! Hurrah ! it shakes the wave,  
 It thunders on the shore, —  
 One flag, one land, one heart, one hand,  
 One Nation, evermore !

1862.

March, 1862.

## BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTH-DAY

NOVEMBER 3, 1864

O EVEN-HANDED Nature ! we confess  
 This life that men so honor, love, and bless  
 Has filled thine olden measure. Not the  
 less

We count the precious seasons that remain;  
 Strike not the level of the golden grain,  
 But heap it high with years, that earth  
 may gain

What heaven can lose, — for heaven is rich  
 in song:

Do not all poets, dying, still prolong  
 Their broken chants amid the seraph throng,

Where, blind no more, Ionia's bard is  
 seen,  
 And England's heavenly minstrel sits be-  
 tween

The Mantuan and the wan-cheeked Floren-  
 tine ?

This was the first sweet singer in the cage  
 Of our close-woven life. A new-born age  
 Claims in his vesper song its heritage:

Spare us, oh spare us long our heart's de-  
 sire !

Moloch, who calls our children through the  
 fire,

Leaves us the gentle master of the lyre.

We count not on the dial of the sun  
 The hours, the minutes, that his sands have  
 run;

Rather, as on those flowers that one by one

From earliest dawn their ordered bloom  
 display

Till evening's planet with her guiding ray  
 Leads in the blind old mother of the day,

We reckon by his songs, each song a  
 flower,  
 The long, long daylight, numbering hour  
 by hour,  
 Each breathing sweetness like a bridal  
 bower.

His morning glory shall we e'er forget ?  
 His noontide's full-blown lily coronet ?  
 His evening primrose has not opened yet; <sup>30</sup>

Nay, even if creeping Time should hide the  
 skies

In midnight from his century-laden eyes,  
 Darkened like his who sang of Paradise,

Would not some hidden song-bud open  
 bright

As the resplendent cactus of the night  
 That floods the gloom with fragrance and  
 with light ?

How can we praise the verse whose music  
 flows

With solemn cadence and majestic close,  
 Pure as the dew that filters through the  
 rose ?

How shall we thank him that in evil days <sup>40</sup>  
 He faltered never, — nor for blame, nor  
 praise,  
 Nor hire, nor party, shamed his earlier  
 lays ?

But as his boyhood was of manliest hue,  
 So to his youth his manly years were  
 true,  
 All dyed in royal purple through and  
 through !

He for whose touch the lyre of Heaven is  
 strung

Needs not the flattering toil of mortal  
 tongue:

Let not the singer grieve to die unsung !

Marbles forget their message to mankind:  
 In his own verse the poet still we find, <sup>50</sup>  
 In his own page his memory lives enshrined,

As in their amber sweets the smothered  
 bees, —

As the fair cedar, fallen before the breeze,  
 Lies self-embalmed amidst the mouldering  
 trees.

Poets, like youngest children, never grow  
Out of their mother's fondness. Nature so  
Holds their soft hands, and will not let  
them go,

Till at the last they track with even feet  
Her rhythmic footsteps, and their pulses  
beat  
Twinned with her pulses, and their lips re-  
peat 60

The secrets she has told them, as their  
own:

Thus is the inmost soul of Nature known,  
And the rapt minstrel shares her awful  
throne!

O lover of her mountains and her woods,  
Her bridal chamber's leafy solitudes,  
Where Love himself with tremulous step  
intrudes,

Her snows fall harmless on thy sacred  
fire:  
Far be the day that claims thy sounding  
lyre  
To join the music of the angel choir!

Yet, since life's amplest measure must be  
filled, 70  
Since throbbing hearts must be forever  
stilled,  
And all must fade that evening sunsets gild,

Grant, Father, ere he close the mortal eyes  
That see a Nation's reeking sacrifice,  
Its smoke may vanish from these blackened  
skies!

Then, when his summons comes, since come  
it must,  
And, looking heavenward with unfaltering  
trust,  
He wraps his drapery round him for the  
dust,

His last fond glance will show him o'er his  
head  
The Northern fires beyond the zenith  
spread 80  
In lambent glory, blue and white and  
red, —

The Southern cross without its bleeding  
load,

The milky way of peace all freshly strowed,  
And every white-throned star fixed in its  
lost abode!

1864.

1864.

# MY ANNUAL<sup>1</sup>

1866

How long will this harp which you once  
loved to hear

Cheat your lips of a smile or your eyes of  
a tear?

How long stir the echoes it wakened of old,  
While its strings were unbroken, untar-  
nished its gold?

Dear friends of my boyhood, my words do  
you wrong;

The heart, the heart only, shall throb in  
my song;

It reads the kind answer that looks from  
your eyes, —

'We will bid our old harper play on till  
he dies.'

Though Youth, the fair angel that looked  
o'er the strings,

Has lost the bright glory that gleamed on  
his wings, 10

Though the freshness of morning has  
passed from its tone,

It is still the old harp that was always  
your own.

I claim not its music, — each note it affords  
I strike from your heart-strings, that lend  
me its chords;

I know you will listen and love to the last,  
For it trembles and thrills with the voice  
of your past.

Ah, brothers! dear brothers! the harp  
that I hold

No craftsman could string and no artisan  
mould;

He shaped it, He strung it, who fashioned  
the lyres

That ring with the hymns of the seraphim  
choirs. 20

Not mine are the visions of beauty it brings,  
Not mine the faint fragrance around it that  
clings;

<sup>1</sup> For a reunion of the class of '29.

Those shapes are the phantoms of years  
that are fled,  
Those sweets breathe from roses your sum-  
mers have shed.

Each hour of the past lends its tribute to  
this,  
Till it blooms like a bower in the Garden  
of Bliss;  
The thorn and the thistle may grow as they  
will,  
Where Friendship unfolds there is Paradise  
still.

The bird wanders careless while summer  
is green,  
The leaf-hidden cradle that rocked him un-  
seen;  
When Autumn's rude fingers the woods<sup>30</sup>  
have undressed,  
The boughs may look bare, but they show  
him his nest.

Too precious these moments! the lustre  
they fling  
Is the light of our year, is the gem of its  
ring,  
So brimming with sunshine, we almost for-  
get  
The rays it has lost, and its border of jet.

While round us the many-hued halo is shed,  
How dear are the living, how near are the  
dead!  
One circle, scarce broken, these waiting be-  
low,  
Those walking the shores where the aspho-  
dels blow!<sup>40</sup>

Not life shall enlarge it nor death shall  
divide, —  
No brother new-born finds his place at my  
side;  
No titles shall freeze us, no grandeurs in-  
fest,  
His Honor, His Worship, are boys like the  
rest.

Some won the world's homage, their names  
we hold dear, —  
But Friendship, not Fame, is the counter-  
sign here;  
Make room by the conqueror crowned in  
the strife  
For the comrade that limps from the battle  
of life!

What tongue talks of battle? Too long we  
have heard  
In sorrow, in anguish, that terrible word;  
It reddened the sunshine, it crimsoned the  
wave,  
It sprinkled our doors with the blood of<sup>50</sup>  
our brave.

Peace, Peace comes at last, with her garland  
of white;  
Peace broods in all hearts as we gather to-  
night;  
The blazon of Union spreads full in the sun;  
We echo its words, — We are one! We  
are one!

1866.

1866.

ALL HERE<sup>1</sup>

It is not what we say or sing,  
That keeps our charm so long unbroken,  
Though every lightest leaf we bring  
May touch the heart as friendship's token;  
Not what we sing or what we say  
Can make us dearer to each other;  
We love the singer and his lay,  
But love as well the silent brother.

Yet bring whate'er your garden grows,  
Thrice welcome to our smiles and  
praises;<sup>10</sup>  
Thanks for the myrtle and the rose,  
Thanks for the marigolds and daisies;  
One flower ere long we all shall claim,  
Alas! unloved of Amaryllis —  
Nature's last blossom — need I name  
The wreath of threescore's silver lilies?

How many, brothers, meet to-night  
Around our boyhood's covered embers?  
Go read the treasured names aright  
The old triennial list remembers;<sup>20</sup>  
Though twenty wear the starry sign  
That tells a life has broke its tether,  
The fifty-eight of 'twenty-nine —  
God bless THE BOYS! — are all together!

These come with joyous look and word,  
With friendly grasp and cheerful greet-  
ing, —  
Those smile unseen, and move unheard,  
The angel guests of every meeting;  
They cast no shadow in the flame  
That flushes from the gilded lustre,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the class reunion, 1867.

But count us — we are still the same;  
One earthly band, one heavenly cluster!

Love dies not when he bows his head  
To pass beyond the narrow portals, —  
The light these glowing moments shed  
Wakes from their sleep our lost immortals;

They come as in their joyous prime,  
Before their morning days were numbered, —

Death stays the envious hand of Time, —  
The eyes have not grown dim that slumbered!

The paths that loving souls have trod  
Arch o'er the dust where worldlings grovel

High as the zenith o'er the sod, —  
The cross above the sexton's shovel!  
We rise beyond the realms of day;  
They seem to stoop from spheres of glory

With us one happy hour to stray,  
While youth comes back in song and story.

Ah! ours is friendship true as steel  
That war has tried in edge and temper;  
It writes upon its sacred seal  
The priest's *ubique* — *omnes* — *semper*!  
It lends the sky a fairer sun  
That cheers our lives with rays as steady  
As if our footsteps had begun  
To print the golden streets already!

The tangling years have clinched its knot  
Too fast for mortal strength to sunder;  
The lightning bolts of noon are shot;  
No fear of evening's idle thunder!  
Too late! too late! — no graceless hand  
Shall stretch its cords in vain endeavor  
To rive the close encircling band  
That made and keeps us one forever!

So when upon the fated scroll  
The falling stars have all descended,  
And, blotted from the breathing roll,  
Our little page of life is ended,  
We ask but one memorial line  
Traced on thy tablet, Gracious Mother:  
'My children. Boys of '29.  
*In pace.* How they loved each other!'

1867.

1867.

 BILL AND JOE<sup>1</sup>

COME, dear old comrade, you and I  
Will steal an hour from days gone by,  
The shining days when life was new,  
And all was bright with morning dew,  
The lusty days of long ago,  
When you were Bill and I was Joe.

Your name may flaunt a titled trail  
Proud as a cockerel's rainbow tail,  
And mine as brief appendix wear  
As Tam O'Shanter's luckless mare;  
To-day, old friend, remember still  
That I am Joe and you are Bill.

You've won the great world's envied prize,  
And grand you look in people's eyes,  
With H O N. and L L. D.  
In big brave letters, fair to see, —  
Your fist, old fellow! off they go! —  
How are you, Bill? How are you, Joe?

You've worn the judge's ermined robe;  
You've taught your name to half the globe;  
You've sung mankind a deathless strain;  
You've made the dead past live again:  
The world may call you what it will,  
But you and I are Joe and Bill.

The chaffing young folks stare and say  
'See those old buffers, bent and gray, —  
They talk like fellows in their teens!  
Mad, poor old boys! That's what it means,' —  
And shake their heads; they little know  
The throbbing hearts of Bill and Joe! —

How Bill forgets his hour of pride,  
While Joe sits smiling at his side;  
How Joe, in spite of time's disguise,  
Finds the old schoolmate in his eyes, —  
Those calm, stern eyes that melt and fill  
As Joe looks fondly up at Bill.

Ah, pensive scholar, what is fame?  
A fitful tongue of leaping flame;  
A giddy whirlwind's fickle gust,  
That lifts a pinch of mortal dust;  
A few swift years, and who can show  
Which dust was Bill and which was Joe?

The weary idol takes his stand,  
Holds out his bruised and aching hand,

<sup>1</sup> For the class reunion, 1868.

While gaping thousands come and go, —  
How vain it seems, this empty show!  
Till all at once his pulses thrill; —  
'T is poor old Joe's 'God bless you, Bill!'

And shall we breathe in happier spheres  
The names that pleased our mortal ears; 50  
In some sweet lull of harp and song  
For earth-born spirits none too long,  
Just whispering of the world below  
Where this was Bill and that was Joe?

No matter; while our home is here  
No sounding name is half so dear;  
When fades at length our lingering day,  
Who cares what pompous tombstones say?  
Read on the hearts that love us still,  
*Hic jacet Joe. Hic jacet Bill.* 60  
1868. 1868.

### NEARING THE SNOW-LINE

SLOW toiling upward from the misty vale,  
I leave the bright enamelled zones below;  
No more for me their beauteous bloom shall  
glow,  
Their lingering sweetness load the morning  
gale;  
Few are the slender flowerets, scentless, pale,  
That on their ice-clad stems all trembling  
blow  
Along the margin of unmelting snow;  
Yet with unsaddened voice thy verge I hail,  
White realm of peace above the flowering  
line;  
Welcome thy frozen domes, thy rocky  
spires!  
O'er thee undimmed the moon-girt planets  
shine,  
On thy majestic altars fade the fires  
That filled the air with smoke of vain de-  
sires,  
And all the unclouded blue of heaven is  
thine!

1870.

1870.

### DOROTHY Q.<sup>1</sup>

#### A FAMILY PORTRAIT

GRANDMOTHER's mother: her age, I guess,  
Thirteen summers, or something less;

<sup>1</sup> I cannot tell the story of Dorothy Q. more simply  
in prose than I have told it in verse, but I can add  
something to it:

Girlish bust, but womanly air;  
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled  
hair;

Lips that lover has never kissed;  
Taper fingers and slender wrist;  
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;  
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green  
Sits unmoving and broods serene. 15  
Hold up the canvas full in view, —  
Look! there's a rent the light shines  
through,  
Dark with a century's fringe of dust, —  
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!  
Such is the tale the lady old,  
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell, —  
One whose best was not over well;  
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,  
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed; 20  
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,  
Dainty colors of red and white,  
And in her slender shape are seen  
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn, —  
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!  
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,  
England's annals have known her name;  
And still to the three-hilled rebel town  
Dear is that ancient name's renown, 25  
For many a civic wreath they won,  
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!  
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;  
Such a gift as never a king  
Save to daughter or son might bring, —  
All my tenure of heart and hand,  
All my title to house and land;  
Mother and sister and child and wife  
And joy and sorrow and death and life! 30

Dorothy was the daughter of Judge Edmund Quincy, and the niece of Josiah Quincy, junior, the young patriot and orator who died just before the American Revolution, of which he was one of the most eloquent and effective promoters. The son of the latter, Josiah Quincy, the first mayor of Boston bearing that name, lived to a great age, one of the most useful and honored citizens of his time.

The canvas of the painting was so much decayed that it had to be replaced by a new one, in doing which the rapier thrust was of course filled up. (Holmes.)

See Morse's *Life of Holmes*, vol. i, pp. 17 and 231-232.

For a reproduction of the portrait, see *Scribner's Magazine*, May, 1879.

What if a hundred years ago  
Those close-shut lips had answered No,  
When forth the tremulous question came  
That cost the maiden her Norman name,  
And under the folds that look so still  
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?  
Should I be I, or would it be  
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's Yes:  
Not the light gossamer stirs with less; 50  
But never a cable that holds so fast  
Through all the battles of wave and blast,  
And never an echo of speech or song  
That lives in the babbling air so long!  
There were tones in the voice that whis-  
pered then  
You may hear to-day in a hundred men..

O lady and lover, how faint and far  
Your images hover, — and here we are,  
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone, —  
Edward's and Dorothy's — all their own, —  
A goodly record for Time to show 61  
Of a syllable spoken so long ago! —  
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive  
For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!  
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,  
And freshen the gold of the tarnished  
frame,  
And gild with a rhyme your household  
name;  
So you shall smile on us brave and bright  
As first you greeted the morning's light, 70  
And live untroubled by woes and fears  
Through a second youth of a hundred  
years.

1871.

## EPILOGUE TO THE BREAK- FAST-TABLE SERIES

AUTOCRAT — PROFESSOR — POET

AT A BOOKSTORE

*Anno Domini 1972*

A CRAZY bookcase, placed before  
A low-price dealer's open door;  
Therein arrayed in broken rows  
A ragged crew of rhyme and prose,  
The homeless vagrants, waifs, and strays  
Whose low estate this line betrays

(Set forth the lesser birds to lime)  
YOUR CHOICE AMONG THESE BOOKS  
1 DIME!

Ho! dealer; for its motto's sake  
This scarecrow from the shelf I take; 10  
Three starveling volumes bound in one,  
Its covers warping in the sun.  
Methinks it hath a musty smell,  
I like its flavor none too well,  
But Yorick's brain was far from dull,  
Though Hamlet pah! 'd, and dropped his  
skull.

Why, here comes rain! The sky grows  
dark, —  
Was that the roll of thunder? Hark!  
The shop affords a safe retreat,  
A chair extends its welcome seat, 20  
The tradesman has a civil look  
(I've paid, impromptu, for my book),  
The clouds portend a sudden shower, —  
I'll read my purchase for an hour.

What have I rescued from the shelf?  
A Boswell, writing out himself!  
For though he changes dress and name,  
The man beneath is still the same,  
Laughing or sad, by fits and starts, 30  
One actor in a dozen parts,  
And whatsoe'er the mask may be,  
The voice assures us, *This is he.*

I say not this to cry him down;  
I find my Shakespeare in his clown,  
His rogues the selfsame parent own;  
Nay! Satan talks in Milton's tone!  
Where'er the ocean inlet strays,  
The salt sea wave its source betrays;  
Where'er the queen of summer blows,  
She tells the zephyr, 'I'm the rose!' 40

And his is not the playwright's page;  
His table does not ape the stage;  
What matter if the figures seen  
Are only shadows on a screen,  
He finds in them his lurking thought,  
And on their lips the words he sought,  
Like one who sits before the keys  
And plays a tune himself to please.

And was he noted in his day?  
Read, flattered, honored? Who shall say?  
Poor wreck of time the wave has cast 51  
To find a peaceful shore at last,

Once glorying in thy gilded name  
And freighted deep with hopes of fame,  
Thy leaf is moistened with a tear,  
The first for many a long, long year !

For be it more or less of art  
That veils the lowliest human heart  
Where passion throbs, where friendship  
glows,  
Where pity's tender tribute flows, 60  
Where love has lit its fragrant fire,  
And sorrow quenched its vain desire,  
For me the altar is divine,  
Its flame, its ashes, — all are mine !

And thou, my brother, as I look  
And see thee pictured in thy book,  
Thy years on every page confessed  
In shadows lengthening from the west,  
Thy glance that wanders, as it sought  
Some freshly opening flower of thought, 70  
Thy hopeful nature, light and free,  
I start to find myself in thee !

Come, vagrant, outcast, wretch forlorn  
In leather jerkin stained and torn,  
Whose talk has filled my idle hour  
And made me half forget the shower,  
I'll do at least as much for you,  
Your coat I'll patch, your guilt renew,  
Read you — perhaps — some other time.  
Not bad, my bargain ! Price one dime ! 80  
1872. 1872.

### PROGRAMME <sup>1</sup>

OCTOBER 7, 1874

READER — gentle — if so be  
Such still live, and live for me,  
Will it please you to be told  
What my tenscore pages hold ?

Here are verses that in spite  
Of myself I needs must write,  
Like the wine that oozes first  
When the unsqueezed grapes have burst.

Here are angry lines, 'too hard !'  
Says the soldier, battle-scarred. 10

<sup>1</sup> Written to introduce the *Songs of Many Seasons*, which contained a large number of Holmes's 'occasional' poems.

Could I smile his scars away  
I would blot the bitter lay,

Written with a knitted brow,  
Read with placid wonder now.  
Throbb'd such passion in my heart ?  
Did his wounds once really smart ?

Here are varied strains that sing  
All the changes life can bring,  
Songs when joyous friends have met,  
Songs the mourner's tears have wet. 20

See the banquet's dead bouquet,  
Fair and fragrant in its day;  
Do they read the selfsame lines, —  
He that fasts and he that dines ?

Year by year, like milestones placed,  
Mark the record Friendship traced.  
Prisoned in the walls of time  
Life has notched itself in rhyme:

As its seasons slid along,  
Every year a notch of song, 30  
From the June of long ago,  
When the rose was full in blow,

Till the scarlet sage has come  
And the cold chrysanthemum.  
Read, but not to praise or blame;  
Are not all our hearts the same ?

For the rest, they take their chance, —  
Some may pay a passing glance;  
Others, — well, they served a turn, —  
Wherefore written, would you learn ? 40

Not for glory, not for pelf,  
Not, be sure, to please myself,  
Not for any meaner ends, —  
Always 'by request of friends.'

Here's the cousin of a king, —  
Would I do the civil thing ?  
Here's the first-born of a queen:  
Here's a slant-eyed Mandarin.

Would I polish off Japan ?  
Would I greet this famous man, 50  
Prince or Prelate, Sheik or Shah ? —  
Figaro çï and Figaro là !

Would I just this once comply ? —  
So they teased and teased till I



(Be the truth at once confessed)  
Wavered — yielded — did my best.

Turn my pages, — never mind  
If you like not all you find;  
Think not all the grains are gold  
Sacramento's sand-banks hold. 60

Every kernel has its shell,  
Every chime its harshest bell,  
Every face its weariest look,  
Every shelf its emptiest book,

Every field its leanest sheaf,  
Every book its dullest leaf,  
Every leaf its weakest line, —  
Shall it not be so with mine ?

Best for worst shall make amends,  
Find us, keep us, leave us friends 70  
Till, perchance, we meet again.  
Benedicite. — Amen !

1874.

1874.

## GRANDMOTHER'S STORY OF BUNKER-HILL BATTLE<sup>1</sup>

AS SHE SAW IT FROM THE BELFRY

'T is like stirring living embers when, at  
eighty, one remembers  
All the achings and the quakings of 'the  
times that tried men's souls;'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The story of Bunker Hill battle is told as literally in accordance with the best authorities as it would have been if it had been written in prose instead of in verse. I have often been asked what steeple it was from which the little group I speak of looked upon the conflict. To this I answer that I am not prepared to speak authoritatively, but that the reader may take his choice among all the steeples standing at that time in the northern part of the city. Christ Church in Salem Street is the one I always think of, but I do not insist upon its claim. As to the personages who made up the small company that followed the old corporal, it would be hard to identify them, but by ascertaining where the portrait by Copley is now to be found, some light may be thrown on their personality.

Daniel Malcolm's gravestone, splintered by British bullets, may be seen in the Copp's Hill burial-ground. (Holmes.)

This poem was first published in 1875, in connection with the centenary of the battle of Bunker Hill. The belfry could hardly have been that of Christ Church, since tradition says that General Gage was stationed there watching the battle, and we may make it to be what was known as the New Brick Church, built in 1721, on Hanover, corner of Richmond Street, Boston, rebuilt of stone in 1845, and pulled down at the widening of Hanover Street in 1871. There are many narratives of the battle of Bunker Hill. Frothingham's *History of the Siege of Boston* is one of the most com-

When I talk of *Whig* and *Tory*, when I tell  
the *Rebel* story,  
To you the words are ashes, but to me  
they're burning coals.

I had heard the muskets' rattle of the  
April running battle;  
Lord Percy's hunted soldiers, I can see  
their red coats still;  
But a deadly chill comes o'er me, as the  
day looms up before me,  
When a thousand men lay bleeding on the  
slopes of Bunker's Hill.

'T was a peaceful summer's morning, when  
the first thing gave us warning  
Was the booming of the cannon from the  
river and the shore: 10  
'Child,' says grandma, 'what's the matter,  
what is all this noise and clatter ?  
Have those scalping Indian devils come to  
murder us once more ?'

Poor old soul ! my sides were shaking in  
the midst of all my quaking,  
To hear her talk of Indians when the guns  
began to roar:  
She had seen the burning village, and the  
slaughter and the pillage,  
When the Mohawks killed her father with  
their bullets through his door.

Then I said, 'Now, dear old granny, don't  
you fret and worry any,  
For I'll soon come back and tell you  
whether this is work or play;  
There can't be mischief in it, so I won't  
be gone a minute' —  
For a minute then I started. I was gone  
the livelong day. 20

No time for bodice-lacing or for looking-  
glass grimacing;

prehensive accounts, and has furnished material for many popular narratives. (*Riverside Literature Series*.)

<sup>2</sup> In December, 1776, Thomas Paine, whose *Common Sense* had so remarkable a popularity as the first homely expression of public opinion on Independence, began issuing a series of tracts called *The Crisis*, eighteen numbers of which appeared. The familiar words quoted by the grandmother must often have been heard and used by her. They begin the first number of *The Crisis*: 'These are the times that try men's souls: the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.' (*Riverside Literature Series*.)

Down my hair went as I hurried, tumbling  
half-way to my heels;  
God forbid your ever knowing, when  
there's blood around her flowing,  
How the lonely, helpless daughter of a  
quiet household feels !

In the street I heard a thumping; and I  
knew it was the stumping  
Of the Corporal, our old neighbor, on that  
wooden leg he wore,  
With a knot of women round him, — it was  
lucky I had found him,  
So I followed with the others, and the Cor-  
poral marched before.

They were making for the steeple, — the  
old soldier and his people;  
The pigeons circled round us as we climbed  
the creaking stair.  
Just across the narrow river — oh, so close  
it made me shiver ! —  
Stood a fortress on the hill-top that but  
yesterday was bare.

Not slow our eyes to find it; well we knew  
who stood behind it,  
Though the earthwork hid them from us,  
and the stubborn walls were dumb:  
Here were sister, wife, and mother, looking  
wild upon each other,  
And their lips were white with terror as  
they said, THE HOUR HAS COME !

The morning slowly wasted, not a morsel  
had we tasted,  
And our heads were almost splitting with  
the cannon's deafening thrill,  
When a figure tall and stately round the  
rampart strode sedately;  
It was PRESCOTT, one since told me; he  
commanded on the hill.

Every woman's heart grew bigger when we  
saw his manly figure,  
With the banian buckled round it, standing  
up so straight and tall;  
Like a gentleman of leisure who is strolling  
out for pleasure,  
Through the storm of shells and cannon-  
shot he walked around the wall.

At eleven the streets were swarming, for  
the redcoats' ranks were forming;

At noon in marching order they were mov-  
ing to the piers;  
How the bayonets gleamed and glistened,  
as we looked far down, and listened  
To the trampling and the drum-beat of the  
belted grenadiers !

At length the men have started, with a  
cheer (it seemed faint-hearted),  
In their scarlet regimentals, with their  
knapsacks on their backs,  
And the reddening, rippling water, as after  
a sea-fight's slaughter,  
Round the barges gliding onward blushed  
like blood along their tracks.

So they crossed to the other border, and  
again they formed in order;  
And the boats came back for soldiers,  
came for soldiers, soldiers still:  
The time seemed everlasting to us women  
faint and fasting, —  
At last they're moving, marching, marching  
proudly up the hill.

We can see the bright steel glancing all  
along the lines advancing, —  
Now the front rank fires a volley, — they  
have thrown away their shot;  
For behind their earthwork lying, all the  
balls above them flying,  
Our people need not hurry; so they wait  
and answer not.

Then the Corporal, our old cripple (he would  
swear sometimes and tittle) —  
He had heard the bullets whistle (in the  
old French war) before —  
Calls out in words of jeering, just as if they  
all were hearing, —  
And his wooden leg thumps fiercely on the  
dusty belfry floor: —

• Oh ! fire away, ye villains, and earn King  
George's shillin's,  
But ye'll waste a ton of powder afore a  
'rebel' falls;  
You may bang the dirt and welcome,  
they're as safe as Dan'l Malcolm,  
Ten foot beneath the gravestone that  
you've splintered with your balls !<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following epitaph is still to be read on a tall  
gravestone, standing as yet undisturbed among the  
transplanted monuments of the dead in Copp's Hill  
Burial Ground, one of the three city [Boston] cem-

In the hush of expectation, in the awe and  
trepidation  
Of the dread approaching moment, we are  
well-nigh breathless all; 70  
Though the rotten bars are failing on the  
rickety belfry railing,  
We are crowding up against them like the  
waves against a wall.

Just a glimpse (the air is clearer), they are  
nearer, — nearer, — nearer,  
When a flash — a curling smoke-wreath —  
then a crash — the steeple shakes —  
The deadly truce is ended; the tempest's  
shroud is rended;  
Like a morning mist it gathered, like a  
thundercloud it breaks!

Oh the sight our eyes discover as the blue-  
black smoke blows over!  
The red-coats stretched in windrows as a  
mower rakes his hay;  
Here a scarlet heap is lying, there a head-  
long crowd is flying  
Like a billow that has broken and is shiv-  
ered into spray. 80

Then we cried, 'The troops are routed!  
they are beat — it can't be doubted!  
God be thanked, the fight is over!' — Ah!  
the grim old soldier's smile!  
'Tell us, tell us why you look so?' (we  
could hardly speak, we shook so), —  
'Are they beaten? Are they beaten?  
ARE they beaten?' — 'Wait a  
while.'

Oh the trembling and the terror! for too  
soon we saw our error:  
They are baffled, not defeated; we have  
driven them back in vain;  
And the columns that were scattered, round  
the colors that were tattered,  
Toward the sullen, silent fortress turn their  
belted breasts again.

teries which have been desecrated and ruined within  
my own remembrance: —

Here lies buried in a  
Stone Grave 10 feet deep  
Capt. DANIEL MALCOLM Mercht  
Who departed this Life  
October 22, 1709,  
Aged 44 years,  
A true son of Liberty,  
A Friend to the Publick,  
An Enemy to oppression,  
And one of the foremost  
In opposing the Revenue Acts  
On America.

(HOLMES.)

All at once, as we are gazing, lo the roofs  
of Charlestown blazing!  
They have fired the harmless village; in an  
hour it will be down! 90  
The Lord in heaven confound them, rain  
his fire and brimstone round them, —  
The robbing, murdering red-coats, that  
would burn a peaceful town!

They are marching, stern and solemn; we  
can see each massive column  
As they near the naked earth-mound with  
the slanting walls so steep.  
Have our soldiers got faint-hearted, and in  
noiseless haste departed?  
Are they panic-struck and helpless? Are  
they palsied or asleep?

Now! the walls they're almost under!  
scarce a rod the foes asunder!  
Not a firelock flashed against them! up  
the earthwork they will swarm!  
But the words have scarce been spoken,  
when the ominous calm is broken,  
And a bellowing crash has emptied all the  
vengeance of the storm! 100

So again, with murderous slaughter, pelted  
backwards to the water,  
Fly Pigot's running heroes and the fright-  
ened braves of Howe;  
And we shout, 'At last they're done for,  
it's their barges they have run for:  
They are beaten, beaten, beaten; and the  
battle's over now!'

And we looked, poor timid creatures, on  
the rough old soldier's features,  
Our lips afraid to question, but he knew  
what we would ask:  
'Not sure,' he said; 'keep quiet, — once  
more, I guess, they'll try it —  
Here's damnation to the cut-throats!' —  
then he handed me his flask,

Saying, 'Gal, you're looking shaky; have  
a drop of old Jamaiky;  
I'm afeard there'll be more trouble afore  
the job is done;' 110  
So I took one scorching swallow; dreadful  
faint I felt and hollow,  
Standing there from early morning when  
the firing was begun.

All through those hours of trial I had  
watched a calm clock dial,

As the hands kept creeping, creeping, —  
 they were creeping round to four,  
 When the old man said, 'They're forming  
 with their bagonets fixed for storm-  
 ing:  
 It's the death-grip that's a-coming, — they  
 will try the works once more.'

With brazen trumpets blaring, the flames  
 behind them glaring,  
 The deadly wall before them, in close array  
 they come;  
 Still onward, upward toiling, like a dragon's  
 fold uncoiling, —  
 Like the rattlesnake's shrill warning the  
 reverberating drum! 120

Over heaps all torn and gory — shall I tell  
 the fearful story,  
 How they surged above the breastwork, as  
 a sea breaks over a deck;  
 How, driven, yet scarce defeated, our worn-  
 out men retreated,  
 With their powder-horns all emptied, like  
 the swimmers from a wreck?

It has all been told and painted; as for me,  
 they say I fainted,  
 And the wooden-legged old Corporal  
 stumped with me down the stair:  
 When I woke from dreams affrighted the  
 evening lamps were lighted, —  
 On the floor a youth was lying; his bleed-  
 ing breast was bare.

And I heard through all the flurry, 'Send  
 for WARREN! hurry! hurry!  
 Tell him here's a soldier bleeding, and he'll  
 come and dress his wound!' 130  
 Ah, we knew not till the morrow told its  
 tale of death and sorrow,  
 How the starlight found him stiffened on  
 the dark and bloody ground.

Who the youth was, what his name was,  
 where the place from which he came  
 was,  
 Who had brought him from the battle, and  
 had left him at our door,  
 He could not speak to tell us; but 't was  
 one of our brave fellows,  
 As the homespun plainly showed us which  
 the dying soldier wore.

For they all thought he was dying, as they  
 gathered round him crying, —

And they said, 'Oh, how they'll miss him!  
 and, 'What *will* his mother do?'  
 Then, his eyelids just unclosing like a child's  
 that has been dozing,  
 He faintly murmured, 'Mother!' — and  
 — I saw his eyes were blue. 14

'Why, grandma, how you're winking!' Ah,  
 my child, it sets me thinking  
 Of a story not like this one. Well, he some-  
 how lived along;  
 So we came to know each other, and I  
 nursed him like a — mother,  
 Till at last he stood before me, tall, and  
 rosy-cheeked, and strong.

And we sometimes walked together in the  
 pleasant summer weather, —  
 'Please to tell us what his name was?'  
 Just your own, my little dear, —  
 There's his picture Copley painted: we be-  
 came so well acquainted,  
 That — in short, that's why I'm grandma,  
 and you children all are here! 1873.

## HOW THE OLD HORSE WON THE BET

DEDICATED BY A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE  
 COLLEGIAN, 1830, TO THE EDITORS OF  
 THE HARVARD ADVOCATE, 1876<sup>1</sup>

'T WAS on the famous trotting-ground,  
 The betting men were gathered round  
 From far and near; the 'cracks' were there  
 Whose deeds the sporting prints declare:  
 The swift g. m., Old Hiram's nag,  
 The fleet s. h., Dan Pfeiffer's brag,  
 With these a third — and who is he  
 That stands beside his fast b. g.?  
 Budd Doble, whose catarrhal name  
 So fills the nasal trump of fame. 10  
 There too stood many a noted steed  
 Of Messenger and Morgan breed;  
 Green horses also, not a few;  
 Unknown as yet what they could do;  
 And all the hacks that know so well  
 The scourgings of the Sunday swell.

Blue are the skies of opening day;  
 The bordering turf is green with May;

<sup>1</sup> The poem was read at a dinner of the editors of the  
*Harvard Advocate*, a literary magazine published by  
 undergraduates.

The sunshine's golden gleam is thrown  
 On sorrel, chestnut, bay, and roan; 20  
 The horses paw and prance and neigh,  
 Fillies and colts like kittens play,  
 And dance and toss their rippled manes  
 Shining and soft as silken skeins;  
 Wagons and gigs are ranged about,  
 And fashion flaunts her gay turn-out;  
 Here stands — each youthful Jehu's  
 dream —

The jointed tandem, ticklish team!  
 And there in ampler breadth expand  
 The splendors of the four-in-hand; 30  
 On faultless ties and glossy tiles  
 The lovely bonnets beam their smiles;  
 (The style's the man, so books avow;  
 The style's the woman, anyhow);  
 From flounces frothed with creamy lace  
 Peeps out the pug-dog's smutty face,  
 Or spaniel rolls his liquid eye,  
 Or stares the wiry pet of Skye, —  
 O woman, in your hours of ease  
 So shy with us, so free with these! 40

'Come on! I'll bet you two to one  
 I'll make him do it!' 'Will you?  
 Done!'

What was it who was bound to do?  
 I did not hear and can't tell you, —  
 Pray listen till my story's through.  
 Scarce noticed, back behind the rest,  
 By cart and wagon rudely prest,  
 The parson's lean and bony bay  
 Stood harnessed in his one-horse shay —  
 Lent to his sexton for the day 50  
 (A funeral — so the sexton said;  
 His mother's uncle's wife was dead).

Like Lazarus bid to Dives' feast,  
 So looked the poor forlorn old beast;  
 His coat was rough, his tail was bare,  
 The gray was sprinkled in his hair;  
 Sportsmen and jockeys knew him not,  
 And yet they say he once could trot  
 Among the fleetest of the town,  
 Till something cracked and broke him  
 down, — 60

The steed's, the statesman's, common  
 lot!

'And are we then so soon forgot?  
 Ah me! I doubt if one of you  
 Has ever heard the name 'Old Blue,'  
 Whose fame through all this region rung  
 In those old days when I was young!

'Bring forth the horse!' Alas! he showed  
 Not like the one Mazeppa rode;  
 Scant-maned, sharp-backed, and shaky-  
 kneed,

The wreck of what was once a steed, 70  
 Lips thin, eyes hollow, stiff in joints;  
 Yet not without his knowing points.  
 The sexton laughing in his sleeve,  
 As if 't were all a make-believe,  
 Led forth the horse, and as he laughed  
 Unhitched the breeching from a shaft,  
 Unclasped the rusty belt beneath,  
 Drew forth the snaffle from his teeth,  
 Slipped off his head-stall, set him free  
 From strap and rein, — a sight to see! 80

So worn, so lean in every limb,  
 It can't be they are saddling him!  
 It is! his back the pig-skin strides  
 And flaps his lank, rheumatic sides;  
 With look of mingled scorn and mirth  
 They buckle round the saddle-girth;  
 With horsy wink and saucy toss  
 A youngster throws his leg across,  
 And so, his rider on his back,  
 They lead him, limping, to the track, 90  
 Far up behind the starting-point,  
 To limber out each stiffened joint.

As through the jeering crowd he past,  
 One pitying look Old Hiram cast;  
 'Go it, ye cripple, while ye can!' —  
 Cried out unsentimental Dan;  
 'A Fast-Day dinner for the crows!' —  
 Budd Doble's scoffing shout arose.

Slowly, as when the walking-beam  
 First feels the gathering head of steam, 100  
 With warning cough and threatening  
 wheeze

The stiff old charger crooks his knees;  
 At first with cautious step sedate,  
 As if he dragged a coach of state;  
 He's not a colt; he knows full well  
 That time is weight and sure to tell;  
 No horse so sturdy but he fears  
 The handicap of twenty years.

As through the throng on either hand  
 The old horse nears the judges' stand, 110  
 Beneath his jockey's feather-weight  
 He warms a little to his gait,  
 And now and then a step is tried  
 That hints of something like a stride.

'Go!' — Through his ear the summons stung  
 As if a battle-trump had rung;  
 The slumbering instincts long unstirred  
 Start at the old familiar word;  
 It thrills like flame through every limb, —  
 What mean his twenty years to him? 120  
 The savage blow his rider dealt  
 Fell on his hollow flanks unfelt;  
 The spur that pricked his staring hide  
 Unheeded tore his bleeding side;  
 Alike to him are spur and rein, —  
 He steps a five-year-old again!

Before the quarter pole was past,  
 Old Hiram said, 'He's going fast.'  
 Long ere the quarter was a half,  
 The chuckling crowd had ceased to laugh;  
 Tighter his frightened jockey clung 131  
 As in a mighty stride he swung,  
 The gravel flying in his track,  
 His neck stretched out, his ears laid back,  
 His tail extended all the while  
 Behind him like a rat-tail file!  
 Off went a shoe, — away it spun,  
 Shot like a bullet from a gun;  
 The quaking jockey shapes a prayer  
 From scraps of oaths he used to swear; 140  
 He drops his whip, he drops his rein,  
 He clutches fiercely for a mane;  
 He'll lose his hold — he sways and reels —  
 He'll slide beneath those trampling heels!  
 The knees of many a horseman quake,  
 The flowers on many a bonnet shake,  
 And shouts arise from left and right,  
 'Stick on! Stick on!' 'Hould tight!  
     Hould tight!'  
 'Cling round his neck and don't let go —  
 That pace can't hold — there! steady!  
     whoa!' 150

But like the sable steed that bore  
 The spectral lover of Lenore,  
 His nostrils snorting foam and fire,  
 No stretch his bony limbs can tire;  
 And now the stand he rushes by,  
 And 'Stop him! — stop him!' is the cry.  
 Stand back! he's only just begun —  
 He's having out three heats in one!

'Don't rush in front! he'll smash your  
     brains;  
 But follow up and grab the reins!' 160  
 Old Hiram spoke. Dan Pfeiffer heard,  
 And sprang impatient at the word;  
 Budd Doble started on his bay,  
 Old Hiram followed on his gray,

And off they spring, and round they go,  
 The fast ones doing 'all they know.'  
 Look! twice they follow at his heels,  
 As round the circling course he wheels,  
 And whirls with him that clinging boy  
 Like Hector round the walls of Troy; 170  
 Still on, and on, the third time round!  
 They're tailing off! they're losing ground!  
 Budd Doble's nag begins to fail!  
 Dan Pfeiffer's sorrel whisks his tail!  
 And see! in spite of whip and shout,  
 Old Hiram's mare is giving out!  
 Now for the finish! at the turn,  
 The old horse — all the rest astern —  
 Comes swinging in, with easy trot;  
 By Jove! he's distanced all the lot! 180

That trot no mortal could explain;  
 Some said, 'Old Dutchman come again!'  
 Some took his time, — at least they tried,  
 But what it was could none decide;  
 One said he could n't understand  
 What happened to his second hand;  
 One said 2.10; *that* could n't be —  
 More like two twenty-two or three;  
 Old Hiram settled it at last;  
 'The time was two — too dee-vel-iah fast!'

The parson's horse had won the bet; 191  
 It cost him something of a sweat;  
 Back in the one-horse shay he went;  
 The parson wondered what it meant,  
 And murmured, with a mild surprise  
 And pleasant twinkle of the eyes,  
 'That funeral must have been a trick,  
 Or corpses drive at double-quick;  
 I should n't wonder, I declare,  
 If brother — Jehu — made the prayer!' 200

And this is all I have to say  
 About that tough old trotting bay,  
 Huddup! Huddup! G'lang! Good day!

Moral for which this tale is told:  
 A horse can trot, for all he's old.

1876.

## FOR WHITTIER'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

DECEMBER 17, 1877

I BELIEVE that the copies of verses I've  
     spun,  
 Like Scheherezade's tales, are a thousand  
     and one;



You remember the story, — those mornings  
in bed, —  
'T was the turn of a copper, — a tale or a  
head.

A doom like Scheherezade's falls upon me  
In a mandate as stern as the Sultan's  
decree:  
I 'm a florist in verse, and what *would* peo-  
ple say  
If I came to a banquet without my bou-  
quet?

It is trying, no doubt, when the company  
knows  
Just the look and the smell of each lily and  
rose,  
The green of each leaf in the sprigs that I  
bring,  
And the shape of the bunch and the knot  
of the string.

Yes, — 'the style is the man,' and the nib  
of one's pen  
> Makes the same mark at twenty, and three-  
score and ten;  
It is so in all matters, if truth may be told;  
Let one look at the cast, he can tell you  
the mould.

How we all know each other! no use in  
disguise;  
Through the holes in the mask comes the  
flash of the eyes;  
We can tell by his — somewhat — each one  
of our tribe,  
As we know the old hat which we cannot  
describe.

Though in Hebrew, in Sanscrit, in Choctaw  
you write,  
Sweet singer who gave us the 'Voices of  
Night,'  
Though in buskin or slipper your song may  
be shod,  
Or the velvety verse that Evangeline trod,  
We shall say, 'You can't cheat us, — we  
know it is you,'  
There is one voice like that, but there can-  
not be two,  
Maestro, whose chant like the dulcimer  
rings:  
And the woods will be hushed while the  
nightingale sings.

And he, so serene, so majestic, so true,  
Whose temple hypæthral the planets shine  
through,  
Let us catch but five words from that mys-  
tical pen,  
We should know our one sage from all  
children of men.

And he whose bright image no distance can  
dim,  
Through a hundred disguises we can't mis-  
take him,  
Whose play is all earnest, whose wit is the  
edge  
(With a beetle behind) of a sham-splitting  
wedge.

Do you know whom we send you, Hidalgos  
of Spain?  
Do you know your old friends when you  
see them again?  
Hosea was Sancho! you Dons of Madrid,  
But Sancho that wielded the lance of the  
Cid!

And the wood-thrush of Essex, — you know  
whom I mean,  
Whose song echoes round us while he sits  
unseen,  
Whose heart-throbs of verse through our  
memories thrill  
Like a breath from the wood, like a breeze  
from the hill,

So fervid, so simple, so loving, so pure,  
We hear but one strain and our verdict is  
sure, —  
Thee cannot elude us, — no further we  
search, —  
'T is Holy George Herbert cut loose from  
his church!

We think it the voice of a seraph that  
sings, —  
Alas! we remember that angels have  
wings, —  
What story is this of the day of his  
birth?  
Let him live to a hundred! we want him  
on earth!

One life has been paid him (in gold) by  
the sun;  
One account has been squared and another  
begun;



But he never will die if he lingers below  
Till we've paid him in love half the bal-  
ance we owe !

1877.

1877.

VERITAS<sup>1</sup>

TRUTH: So the frontlet's older legend ran,  
On the brief record's opening page dis-  
played;  
Not yet those clear-eyed scholars were  
afraid  
Lest the fair fruit that wrought the woe of  
man  
By far Euphrates — where our sire began  
His search for truth, and, seeking, was  
betrayed —  
Might work new treason in their forest  
shade,  
Doubling the curse that brought life's  
shortened span.  
Nurse of the future, daughter of the past,  
That stern phylactery best becomes thee  
now :  
Lift to the morning star thy marble  
brow !  
Cast thy brave truth on every warring  
blast !  
Stretch thy white hand to that forbidden  
bough,  
And let thine earliest symbol be thy last !

1878.

1878.

## THE SILENT MELODY

'BRING me my broken harp,' he said;  
'We both are wrecks, — but as ye  
will, —  
Though all its ringing tones have fled,  
Their echoes linger round it still;  
It had some golden strings, I know,  
But that was long — how long ! — ago.

<sup>1</sup> The original motto on the seal of Harvard College, adopted in 1643. In a letter enclosing this sonnet and another entitled 'Christo et Ecclesiae,' to be read at a meeting of the New York Harvard Club, Holmes says: 'At the first meeting of the Governors of the College under the Charter of 1642, held in the year 1643, it was "ordered that there shall be a College seal in forme following," namely, a shield with three open books bearing the word *Veritas*. This motto was soon exchanged for *In Christi gloriam*; and this again shortly superseded by the one so long used, *Christo et Ecclesiae*.'

Holmes's sonnet was meant as a plea that the older and broader motto, *Veritas*, be restored. (See Morse's *Life of Holmes*, vol. i, pp. 236-240. This has now been done, but without displacing the other motto, *Christo et Ecclesiae*.)

'I cannot see its tarnished gold,  
I cannot hear its vanished tone,  
Scarce can my trembling fingers hold  
The pillared frame so long their own; <sup>10</sup>  
We both are wrecks, — awhile ago  
It had some silver strings, I know,

'But on them Time too long has played  
The solemn strain that knows no change,  
And where of old my fingers strayed  
The chords they find are new and  
strange, —  
Yes ! iron strings, — I know, — I know, —  
We both are wrecks of long ago.

'We both are wrecks, — a shattered  
pair, —  
Strange to ourselves in time's dis-  
guise . . . <sup>20</sup>  
What say ye to the lovesick air  
That brought the tears from Marian's  
eyes ?  
Ay ! trust me, — under breasts of snow  
Hearts could be melted long ago !

'Or will ye hear the storm-song's crash  
That from his dreams the soldier woke,  
And bade him face the lightning flash  
When battle's cloud in thunder  
broke ? . . .  
Wrecks, — nought but wrecks ! — the time  
was when  
We two were worth a thousand men !' <sup>30</sup>

And so the broken harp they bring  
With pitying smiles that none could  
blame;  
Alas ! there's not a single string  
Of all that filled the tarnished frame !  
But see ! like children overjoyed,  
His fingers rambling through the void !

'I clasp thee ! Ay . . . mine ancient  
lyre . . .  
Nay, guide my wandering fingers. . . .  
There !

They love to dally with the wire  
As Isaac played with Esau's hair. . . . <sup>40</sup>  
Hush ! ye shall hear the famous tune  
That Marian called the Breath of June !'

And so they softly gather round:  
Rapt in his tuneful trance he seems:  
His fingers move: but not a sound !  
A silence like the song of dreams. . . .

'There! ye have heard the air,' he cries,  
'That brought the tears from Marian's  
eyes!'

Ah, smile not at his fond conceit,  
Nor deem his fancy wrought in vain; 50  
To him the unreal sounds are sweet, —  
No discord mars the silent strain  
Scored on life's latest, starlit page —  
The voiceless melody of age.

Sweet are the lips of all that sing,  
When Nature's music breathes unsought,  
But never yet could voice or string  
So truly shape our tenderest thought  
As when by life's decaying fire  
Our fingers sweep the stringless lyre! 60  
1878.

### THE IRON GATE<sup>1</sup>

WHERE is this patriarch you are kindly  
greeting?

Not unfamiliar to my ear his name,  
Nor yet unknown to many a joyous meet-  
ing  
In days long vanished, — is he still the  
same,

Or changed by years, forgotten and for-  
getting,  
Dull-eared, dim-sighted, slow of speech  
and thought,  
Still o'er the sad, degenerate present fret-  
ting,  
Where all goes wrong, and nothing as it  
ought?

Old age, the graybeard! Well, indeed, I  
know him, —  
Shrunk, tottering, bent, of aches and ills  
the prey; 10  
In sermon, story, fable, picture, poem,  
Oft have I met him from my earliest  
day:

In my old Æsop, toiling with his bundle, —  
His load of sticks, — politely asking  
Death,  
Who comes when called for, — would he  
lug or trundle  
His fagot for him? — he was scant of  
breath.

<sup>1</sup> Read by Holmes at the celebration of his seventieth birthday.

And sad 'Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,' —  
Has he not stamped the image on my  
soul,  
In that last chapter, where the worn-out  
Teacher  
Sighs o'er the loosened cord, the broken  
bowl? 20

Yes, long, indeed, I've known him at a dis-  
tance,  
And now my lifted door-latch shows him  
here;  
I take his shrivelled hand without resist-  
ance,  
And find him smiling as his step draws  
near.

What though of gilded baubles he bereaves  
us,  
Dear to the heart of youth, to manhood's  
prime;  
Think of the calm he brings, the wealth he  
leaves us,  
The hoarded spoils, the legacies of time!

Altars once flaming, still with incense fra-  
grant,  
Passion's uneasy nurslings rocked asleep,  
Hope's anchor faster, wild desire less va-  
grant, 31  
Life's flow less noisy, but the stream  
how deep!

Still as the silver cord gets worn and  
slender,  
Its lightened task-work tugs with lessen-  
ing strain,  
Hands get more helpful, voices, grown more  
tender,  
Soothe with their softened tones the  
slumberous brain.

Youth longs and manhood strives, but age  
remembers,  
Sits by the raked-up ashes of the past,  
Spreads its thin hands above the whitening  
embers  
That warm its creeping life-blood till  
the last. 40

Dear to its heart is every loving token  
That comes unbidden ere its pulse grows  
cold,  
Ere the last lingering ties of life are broken,  
Its labors ended and its story told.

Ah, while around us rosy youth rejoices,  
 For us the sorrow-laden breezes sigh,  
 And through the chorus of its jocund  
       voices  
 Throbs the sharp note of misery's hope-  
       less cry.

As on the gauzy wings of fancy flying  
 From some far orb I track our watery  
       sphere,  
 Home of the struggling, suffering, doubt-<sup>50</sup>  
       ing, dying,  
 The silvered globule seems a glistening  
       tear.

But Nature lends her mirror of illusion  
 To win from saddening scenes our age-  
       dimmed eyes,  
 And misty day-dreams blend in sweet con-  
       fusion  
 The wintry landscape and the summer  
       skies.

So when the iron portal shuts behind us,  
 And life forgets us in its noise and  
       whirl,  
 Visions that shunned the glaring noonday  
       find us,  
 And glimmering starlight shows the  
       gates of pearl.<sup>60</sup>

I come not here your morning hour to sad-  
       den,  
 A limping pilgrim, leaning on his staff, —  
 I, who have never deemed it sin to glad-  
       den  
 This vale of sorrows with a wholesome  
       laugh.

If word of mine another's gloom has  
       brightened,  
 Through my dumb lips the heaven-sent  
       message came;  
 If hand of mine another's task has light-  
       ened,  
 It felt the guidance that it dares not  
       claim.

But, O my gentle sisters, O my brothers,  
 These thick-sown snow-flakes hint of  
       toil's release;<sup>70</sup>  
 These feebler pulses bid me leave to oth-  
       ers  
 The tasks once welcome; evening asks  
       for peace.

Time claims his tribute; silence now is  
       golden;  
 Let me not vex the too long suffering  
       lyre;  
 Though to your love untiring still beholden,  
 The curfew tells me —cover up the fire.

And now with grateful smile and accents  
       cheerful,  
 And warmer heart than look or word  
       can tell,  
 In simplest phrase —these traitorous eyes  
       are tearful —  
 Thanks, Brothers, Sisters, — Children,  
       —and farewell!<sup>80</sup>

1879.

1879.

### THE SHADOWS<sup>1</sup>

'How many have gone?' was the question  
       of old  
 Ere Time our bright ring of its jewels  
       bereft;  
 Alas! for too often the death-bell has tolled,  
 And the question we ask is, 'How many  
       are left?'

Bright sparkled the wine; there were *fifty*  
       that quaffed;  
 For a decade had slipped and had taken  
       but three.  
 How they frolicked and sung, how they  
       shouted and laughed,  
 Like a school full of boys from their  
       benches set free!

There were speeches and toasts, there were  
       stories and rhymes,  
 The hall shook its sides with their mer-  
       riment's noise;<sup>10</sup>  
 As they talked and lived over the college-  
       day times, —  
 No wonder they kept their old name of  
       'The Boys'!

The seasons moved on in their rhythmical  
       flow  
 With mornings like maidens that pouted  
       or smiled,  
 With the bud and the leaf and the fruit  
       and the snow,  
 And the year-books of Time in his al-  
       coves were piled.

<sup>1</sup> For the class reunion, 1880.

There were *forty* that gathered where fifty  
had met;  
Some locks had got silvered, some lives  
had grown sere,  
But the laugh of the laughers was lusty as  
yet,  
And the song of the singers rose ringing  
and clear. 20

Still flitted the years; there were *thirty* that  
came;  
'The Boys' they were still, and they an-  
swered their call;  
There were foreheads of care, but the smiles  
were the same,  
And the chorus rang loud through the  
garlanded hall.

The hour-hand moved on, and they gath-  
ered again;  
There were *twenty* that joined in the  
hymn that was sung;  
But ah! for our song-bird we listened in  
vain, —  
The crystalline tones like a seraph's that  
rung!

How narrow the circle that holds us to-  
night!  
How many the loved ones that greet us  
no more, 30  
As we meet like the stragglers that come  
from the fight,  
Like the mariners flung from a wreck  
on the shore!

We look through the twilight for those we  
have lost;  
The stream rolls between us, and yet  
they seem near;  
Already outnumbered by those who have  
crossed,  
Our band is transplanted, its home is not  
here!

They smile on us still — is it only a  
dream? —  
While fondly or proudly their names we  
recall;  
They beckon — they come — they are cross-  
ing the stream —  
Lo! the Shadows! the Shadows! room  
— room for them all! 40

1880.

1880.

## AT THE SATURDAY CLUB<sup>1</sup>

THIS is our place of meeting; opposite  
That towered and pillared building: look  
at it;  
King's Chapel in the Second George's day,  
Rebellion stole its regal name away, —  
Stone Chapel sounded better; but at last  
The poisoned name of our provincial past  
Had lost its ancient venom; then once more  
Stone Chapel was King's Chapel as before.  
(So let rechristened North Street, when it  
can,  
Bring back the days of Marlborough and  
Queen Anne!) 10

<sup>1</sup> About the time when these papers [*The Autocrat*] were published, the Saturday Club was founded, or, rather, found itself in existence, without any organization, almost without parentage. It was natural enough that such men as Emerson, Longfellow, Agassiz, Peirce, with Hawthorne, Motley, Sumner, when within reach, and others who would be good company for them, should meet and dine together once in a while, as they did, in point of fact, every month, and as some who are still living, with other and newer members, still meet and dine. If some of them had not admired each other they would have been exceptions in the world of letters and science. [Holmes here alludes to the fact that the profane sometimes called this club 'The Mutual Admiration Society.' It is related that when a book by one of its members was reviewed by another member in the 'North American Review,' some outsider wrote below the heading of the article, 'Insured in the Mutual.'] The club deserves being remembered for having no constitution or by-laws, for making no speeches, reading no papers, observing no ceremonies, coming and going at will without remark, and acting out, though it did not proclaim the motto, 'Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?' (HOLMES.)

Outside the sacred *penetralia* which were shut within his own front door, nothing else in Dr. Holmes's life gave him so much pleasure as did this Club. He loved it; he hugged the thought of it. When he was writing to Lowell and Motley in Europe, he seemed to think that merely to name 'The Club' was enough to give a genial flavor to his page. He would tell who were present at the latest meeting, and where they sat. He would recur to those who used to come, and mention their habitual seats, — matters which his correspondents already knew perfectly well. But the names were sweet things in his mouth; and, in fact, he was doing one of the deepest acts of intimacy in thus touching the chord of the dearest reminiscence which their memories held in common. By this he seemed sure that he would make his letter welcome, however little else of news or interest it might convey. In the later days there came to be something pathetic about his attachment to that which still had existence and yet for him was almost all a memory. In 1883 he wrote to Lowell: 'I go to the Saturday Club quite regularly, but the company is more of ghosts than of flesh and blood for me. I carry a stranger there now and then, introduce him to the members who happen to be there, and then say: There at that end used to sit Agassiz; here at this end Longfellow; Emerson used to be there, and Lowell often next him; on such an occasion Hawthorne was with us, at another time Motley, and Sumner, and smaller constellations, — nebulae if you will, but luminous more or less in the provincial firmament.' (Morse's *Life of Holmes*, vol. i, pp. 243, 244.)

Cf. Lowell's 'Agassiz,' and Holmes's *Life of Emerson*.

Next the old church your wandering eye  
will meet —  
A granite pile that stares upon the street —  
Our civic temple; slanderous tongues have  
said  
Its shape was modelled from St. Botolph's  
head,  
Lofty, but narrow; jealous passers-by  
Say Boston always held her head too high.  
Turn half-way round, and let your look  
survey  
The white façade that gleams across the  
way, —  
The many-windowed building, tall and  
wide,  
The palace-inn that shows its northern  
side  
In grateful shadow when the sunbeams  
beat  
The granite wall in summer's scorching  
heat.  
This is the place; whether its name you  
spell  
Tavern, or caravansera, or hotel.  
Would I could steal its echoes! you should  
find  
Such store of vanished pleasures brought  
to mind:  
Such feasts! the laughs of many a jocund  
hour  
That shook the mortar from King George's  
tower;  
Such guests! What famous names its re-  
cord boasts,  
Whose owners wander in the mob of  
ghosts!  
Such stories! Every beam and plank is  
filled  
With juicy wit the joyous talkers spilled,  
Ready to ooze, as once the mountain pine  
The floors are laid with oozed its turpen-  
tine!

A month had flitted since The Club had  
met;  
The day came round; I found the table set,  
The waiters lounging round the marble  
stairs,  
Empty as yet the double row of chairs.  
I was a full half hour before the rest,  
Alone, the banquet-chamber's single guest.  
So from the table's side a chair I took,  
And having neither company nor book  
To keep me waking, by degrees there crept  
A torpor over me, — in short, I slept.

Loosed from its chain, along the wreck-  
strorn track  
Of the dead years my soul goes travelling  
back;  
My ghosts take on their robes of flesh; it  
seems  
Dreaming is life; nay, life less life than  
dreams,  
So real are the shapes that meet my eyes.  
They bring no sense of wonder, no sur-  
prise,  
No hint of other than an earth-born source;  
All seems plain daylight, everything of  
course.  
How dim the colors are, how poor and  
faint  
This palette of weak words with which I  
paint!  
Here sit my friends; if I could fix them so  
As to my eyes they seem, my page would  
glow  
Like a queen's missal, warm as if the  
brush  
Of Titian or Velasquez brought the flush  
Of life into their features. *Ay de mi!*  
If syllables were pigments, you should  
see  
Such breathing portraitures as never man  
Found in the Pitti or the Vatican.

Here sits our POET, Laureate, if you will.  
Long has he worn the wreath, and wears it  
still.  
*Dead?* Nay, not so; and yet they say his  
bust  
Looks down on marbles covering royal dust,  
Kings by the Grace of God, or Nature's  
grace;  
*Dead!* No! Alive! I see him in his place,  
Full-featured, with the bloom that heaven  
denies  
Her children, pinched by cold New England  
skies,  
Too often, while the nursery's happier few  
Win from a summer cloud its roseate hue.  
Kind, soft-voiced, gentle, in his eye there  
shines  
The ray serene that filled Evangeline's.  
Modest he seems, not shy; content to  
wait  
Amid the noisy clamor of debate  
The looked-for moment when a peaceful  
word  
Smooths the rough ripples louder tongues  
have stirred.

In every tone I mark his tender grace  
And all his poems hinted in his face; 80  
What tranquil joy his friendly presence  
gives!  
How could I think him dead? He lives!  
He lives!

There, at the table's further end I see  
In his old place our Poet's *vis-à-vis*,  
The great PROFESSOR, strong, broad-should-  
ered, square,  
In life's rich noontide, joyous, debonair.  
His social hour no leaden care alloys,  
His laugh rings loud and mirthful as a  
boy's, —  
That lusty laugh the Puritan forgot, —  
What ear has heard it and remembers  
not? 90  
How often, halting at some wide crevasse  
Amid the windings of his Alpine pass,  
High up the cliffs, the climbing moun-  
taineer,  
Listening the far-off avalanche to hear,  
Silent, and leaning on his steel-shod staff,  
Has heard that cheery voice, that ringing  
laugh,  
From the rude cabin whose nomadic walls  
Creep with the moving glacier as it crawls!  
How does vast Nature lead her living  
train  
In ordered sequence through that spacious  
brain, 100  
As in the primal hour when Adam named  
The new-born tribes that young creation  
claimed! —  
How will her realm be darkened, losing  
thee,  
Her darling, whom we call *our* AGASSIZ!

But who is he whose massive frame belies  
The maiden shyness of his downcast eyes?  
Who broods in silence till, by questions  
pressed,  
Some answer struggles from his laboring  
breast?  
An artist Nature meant to dwell apart, 109  
Locked in his studio with a human heart,  
Tracking its caverned passions to their lair,  
And all its throbbing mysteries laying bare.  
Count it no marvel that he broods alone  
Over the heart he studies, — 't is his own;  
So in his page, whatever shape it wear,  
The Essex wizard's shadowed self is there, —  
The great ROMANCER, hid beneath his veil  
Like the stern preacher of his sombre tale;

Virile in strength, yet bashful as a girl,  
Pronder than Hester, sensitive as Pearl. 120

From his mild throng of worshippers  
released,  
Our Concord Delphi sends its chosen priest,  
Prophet or poet, mystic, sage, or seer,  
By every title always welcome here.  
Why that ethereal spirit's frame describe?  
You know the race-marks of the Brahmin  
tribe, —  
The spare, slight form, the sloping shoul-  
der's droop,  
The calm, scholastic mien, the clerkly  
stoop,  
The lines of thought the sharpened features  
wear,  
Carved by the edge of keen New England  
air. 130

List! for he speaks! As when a king  
would choose  
The jewels for his bride, he might refuse  
This diamond for its flaw, — find that less  
bright  
Than those, its fellows, and a pearl less  
white  
Than fits her snowy neck, and yet at last,  
The fairest gems are chosen, and made fast  
In golden fetters; so, with light delays  
He seeks the fittest word to fill his phrase;  
Nor vain nor idle his fastidious quest,  
His chosen word is sure to prove the best.

Where in the realm of thought, whose  
air is song, 141  
Does he, the Buddha of the West, belong?  
He seems a winged Franklin, sweetly wise,  
Born to unlock the secrets of the skies;  
And which the nobler calling, — if 't is fair  
Terrestrial with celestial to compare, —  
To guide the storm-cloud's elemental flame,  
Or walk the chambers whence the light-  
ning came,  
Amidst the sources of its subtile fire,  
And steal their effluence for his lips and  
lyre? 150

If lost at times in vague aerial flights,  
None treads with firmer footstep when he  
lights;  
A soaring nature, ballasted with sense,  
Wisdom without her wrinkles or pretence,  
In every Bible he has faith to read,  
And every altar helps to shape his creed.  
Ask you what name this prisoned spirit bears  
While with ourselves this fleeting breath it  
shares? 158

Till angels greet him with a sweeter one  
In heaven, on earth we call him EMERSON.

I start; I wake; the vision is withdrawn;  
Its figures fading like the stars at dawn;  
Crossed from the roll of life their cherished names,  
And memory's pictures fading in their frames;  
Yet life is lovelier for these transient gleams  
Of buried friendships; blest is he who dreams!

1884.

### THE GIRDLE OF FRIENDSHIP<sup>1</sup>

SHE gathered at her slender waist  
The beauteous robe she wore;  
Its folds a golden belt embraced,  
One rose-hued gem it bore.

The girdle shrank; its lessening round  
Still kept the shining gem,  
But now her flowing locks it bound,  
A lustrous diadem.

And narrower still the circlet grew;  
Behold! a glittering band,  
Its roseate diamond set anew,  
Her neck's white column spanned.

Suns rise and set; the straining clasp  
The shortened links resist,  
Yet flashes in a bracelet's grasp  
The diamond, on her wrist.

At length, the round of changes past  
The thieving years could bring,  
The jewel, glittering to the last,  
Still sparkles in a ring.

So, link by link, our friendships part,  
So loosen, break, and fall,  
A narrowing zone; the loving heart  
Lives changeless through them all.

1884.

1884.

### TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL<sup>2</sup>

THIS is your month, the month of 'perfect days,'  
Birds in full song and blossoms all ablaze.

<sup>1</sup> For the class reunion, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> On his return from England.

Nature herself your earliest welcome  
breathes,  
Spreads every leaflet, every bower in  
wreathes;  
Carpets her paths for your returning feet,  
Puts forth her best your coming steps to  
greet;  
And Heaven must surely find the earth in  
tune  
When Home, sweet Home, exhales the  
breath of June.

These blessed days are waning all too fast.  
And June's bright visions mingling with  
the past;  
Lilacs have bloomed and faded, and the rose  
Has dropped its petals, but the clover blows,  
And fills its slender tubes with honeyed  
sweets;  
The fields are pearled with milk-white  
margarites;  
The dandelion, which you sang of old,  
Has lost its pride of place, its crown of gold,  
But still displays its feathery-mantled  
globe,  
Which children's breath or wandering  
winds unrobe.  
These were your humble friends; your  
opened eyes  
Nature had trained her common gifts to  
prize;  
Not Cam nor Isis taught you to despise  
Charles, with his muddy margin and the  
harsh,  
Plebeian grasses of the reeking marsh.  
New England's home-bred scholar, well  
you knew  
Her soil, her speech, her people, through  
and through,  
And loved them ever with the love that  
holds  
All sweet, fond memories in its fragrant  
folds.  
Though far and wide your winged words  
have flown,  
Your daily presence kept you all our own,  
Till, with a sorrowing sigh, a thrill of  
pride,  
We heard your summons, and you left our  
side  
For larger duties and for tasks untried.  
How pleased the Spaniards for a while to  
claim  
This frank Hidalgo with the liquid name,



Who stored their classics on his crowded  
shelves  
And loved their Calderon as they did  
themselves !  
Before his eyes what changing pageants  
pass !  
The bridal feast how near the funeral  
mass !  
The death-stroke falls, — the Misereres  
wail;  
The joy - bells ring, — the tear - stained  
cheeks unveil,  
While, as the playwright shifts his pictured  
scene,  
The royal mourner crowns his second  
queen.

From Spain to Britain is a goodly stride, —  
Madrid and London long-stretched leagues  
divide.

What if I send him, 'Uncle S., says he,'  
To my good cousin whom he calls 'J. B.' ?  
A nation's servants go where they are  
sent, —

He heard his Uncle's orders, and he went.  
By what enchantments, what alluring  
arts,

Our truthful James led captive British  
hearts, —

Whether his shrewdness made their states-  
men halt,

Or if his learning found their Dons at fault,  
Or if his virtue was a strange surprise,  
Or if his wit flung star-dust in their eyes, —  
Like honest Yankees we can simply guess;  
But that he did it all must needs confess.

England herself without a blush may  
claim

Her only conqueror since the Norman  
came.

Eight years an exile ! What a weary  
while

Since first our herald sought the mother  
isle !

His snow-white flag no churlish wrong has  
soiled, —

He left unchallenged, he returns unspoiled.

Here let us keep him, here he saw the  
light, —

His genius, wisdom, wit, are ours by right;  
And if we lose him our lament will be

We have 'five hundred' — not 'as good  
as he.'

1885.

(1888.)

# THE LYRE OF ANACREON<sup>1</sup>

THE minstrel of the classic lay  
Of love and wine who sings  
Still found the fingers run astray  
That touched the rebel strings.

Of Cadmus he would fain have sung,  
Of Atreus and his line;  
But all the jocund echoes rung  
With songs of love and wine.

Ah, brothers ! I would fain have caught  
Some fresher fancy's gleam;  
My truant accents find, unsought,  
The old familiar theme.

Love, Love ! but not the sportive child  
With shaft and twanging bow,  
Whose random arrows drove us wild  
Some threescore years ago;

Not Eros, with his joyous laugh,  
The urchin blind and bare,  
But Love, with spectacles and staff,  
And scanty, silvered hair.

Our heads with frosted locks are white,  
Our roofs are thatched with snow,  
But red, in chilling winter's spite,  
Our hearts and hearthstones glow.

Our old acquaintance, Time, drops in,  
And while the running sands  
Their golden thread unheeded spin,  
He warms his frozen hands.

Stay, winged hours, too swift, too sweet,  
And waft this message o'er  
To all we miss, from all we meet  
On life's fast-crumbling shore:

Say that, to old affection true,  
We hug the narrowing chain  
That binds our hearts, — alas, how few  
The links that yet remain !

The fatal touch awaits them all  
That turns the rocks to dust;  
From year to year they break and fall, —  
They break, but never rust.

Say if one note of happier strain  
This worn-out harp afford, —

<sup>1</sup> For the class reunion, 1885.

One throb that trembles, not in vain, —  
Their memory lent its chord.

Say that when Fancy closed her wings  
And Passion quenched his fire,  
Love, Love, still echoed from the strings  
As from Anacreon's lyre !

1885.

(1888.)

### AFTER THE CURFEW<sup>1</sup>

THE Play is over. While the light  
Yet lingers in the darkening hall,  
I come to say a last Good-night  
Before the final *Exeunt all*.

We gathered once, a joyous throng:  
The jovial toasts went gayly round;  
With jest, and laugh, and shout, and song,  
We made the floors and walls resound.

We come with feeble steps and slow,  
A little band of four or five,  
Left from the wrecks of long ago,  
Still pleased to find ourselves alive.

10

Alive ! How living, too, are they  
Whose memories it is ours to share !  
Spread the long table's full array, —  
There sits a ghost in every chair !

One breathing form no more, alas !  
Amid our slender group we see ;<sup>2</sup>  
With him we still remained 'The Class,' —  
Without his presence what are we ?

20

The hand we ever loved to clasp, —  
That tireless hand which knew no rest, —  
Loosed from affection's clinging grasp,  
Lies nerveless on the peaceful breast.

<sup>1</sup> The last of the poems written for the class of '29. See the letter from Samuel May to F. J. Garrison, quoted in Morse's *Life of Holmes*, vol. 1, p. 78 : "After the Curfew" was positively the last. "Farewell ! I let the curtain fall." The curtain never rose again for "'29." We met once more — a year later — at Parker's. But three were present, Smith, Holmes, and myself. No poem — very quiet — something very like tears. The following meetings — all at Dr. H.'s house — were quiet, social, *talking* meetings — the Doctor of course doing the *live* talking. . . . At one of these meetings four were present, all the survivors but one ; and there was more *general* talk. But never another *Class Poem*.'

This poem, and the three following, appeared in *Over the Teacups*.

<sup>2</sup> The personal reference is to our greatly beloved and honored classmate, James Freeman Clarke. (Holmes.)

The beaming eye, the cheering voice,  
That lent to life a generous glow,  
Whose every meaning said 'Rejoice,'  
We see, we hear, no more below.

The air seems darkened by his loss,  
Earth's shadowed features look less fair,  
And heavier weighs the daily cross  
His willing shoulders helped us bear.

31

Why mourn that we, the favored few  
Whom grasping Time so long has spared  
Life's sweet illusions to pursue,  
The common lot of age have shared ?

In every pulse of Friendship's heart  
There breeds unfelt a throb of pain, —  
One hour must rend its links apart,  
Though years on years have forged the chain.

40

So ends 'The Boys,' — a lifelong play.  
We too must hear the Prompter's call  
To fairer scenes and brighter day:  
Farewell ! I let the curtain fall.

1889.

1890.

### LA MAISON D'OR

(BAR HARBOR)

FROM this fair home behold on either side  
The restful mountains or the restless sea:  
So the warm sheltering walls of life divide  
Time and its tides from still eternity.

Look on the waves: their stormy voices  
teach

That not on earth may toil and struggle  
cease.

Look on the mountains: better far than  
speech

Their silent promise of eternal peace.

1890.

1890.

### TOO YOUNG FOR LOVE

Too young for love ?

Ah, say not so !

Tell reddening rosebuds not to blow !

Wait not for spring to pass away, —

Love's summer months begin with May !

Too young for love ?  
Ah, say not so !  
Too young ? Too young ?  
Ah, no ! no ! no !

Too young for love ?  
Ah, say not so,

While daisies bloom and tulips glow !  
June soon will come with lengthened day  
To practise all love learned in May.

Too young for love ?  
Ah, say not so !  
Too young ? Too young ?  
Ah, no ! no ! no !

1890.

1890.

# THE BROOMSTICK TRAIN; OR, THE RETURN OF THE WITCHES<sup>1</sup>

Look out ! Look out, boys ! Clear the  
track !

The witches are here ! They've all come  
back !

They hanged them high, — No use ! No  
use !

What cares a witch for a hangman's noose ?  
They buried them deep, but they would n't  
lie still,

For cats and witches are hard to kill;  
They swore they should n't and would n't  
die, —

Books said they did, but they lie ! they lie !

A couple of hundred years, or so,  
They had knocked about in the world  
below,

When an Essex Deacon dropped in to call,  
And a homesick feeling seized them all;

<sup>1</sup> Look here ! There are crowds of people whirled through our streets on these new-fashioned cars, with their witch-broomsticks overhead, — if they don't come from Salem, they ought to, — and not more than one in a dozen of these fish-eyed bipeds thinks or cares a nickel's worth about the miracle which is wrought for their convenience. They know that without hands or feet, without horses, without steam, so far as they can see, they are transported from place to place, and that there is nothing to account for it except the witch-broomstick and the iron or copper cobweb which they see stretched above them. What do they know or care about this last revelation of the omnipresent spirit of the material universe ? We ought to go down on our knees when one of these mighty caravans, car after car, spins by us, under the mystic impulse which seems to know not whether its train is loaded or empty. (Holmes, in *Over the Teacups*.) The first electric trolley-cars had just been introduced when this poem was written, in 1890.

For he came from a place they knew full  
well,

And many a tale he had to tell.

They longed to visit the haunts of men,  
To see the old dwellings they knew again,  
And ride on their broomsticks all around  
Their wide domain of unhallowed ground.

In Essex county there's many a roof  
Well known to him of the cloven hoof; 20  
The small square windows are full in view  
Which the midnight hags went sailing  
through,  
On their well-trained broomsticks mounted  
high,

Seen like shadows against the sky;  
Crossing the track of owls and bats,  
Hugging before them their coal-black cats.

Well did they know, those gray old wives,  
The sights we see in our daily drives:  
Shimmer of lake and shine of sea,  
Browne's bare hill with its lonely tree, 30  
(It was n't then as we see it now,  
With one scant scalp-lock to shade its  
brow;)

Dusky nooks in the Essex woods,  
Dark, dim, Dante-like solitudes,  
Where the tree-toad watches the sinuous  
snake

Glide through his forests of fern and  
brake;

Ipswich River; its old stone bridge;  
Far off Andover's Indian Ridge,  
And many a scene where history tells  
Some shadow of bygone terror dwells, — 40  
Of 'Norman's Woe' with its tale of dread,  
Of the Screeching Woman of Marblehead,  
(The fearful story that turns men pale:  
Don't bid me tell it, — my speech would  
fail.)

Who would not, will not, if he can,  
Bathe in the breezes of fair Cape Ann, —  
Rest in the bowers her bays enfold,  
Loved by the sachems and squaws of old ?  
Home where the white magnolias bloom,  
Sweet with the bayberry's chaste perfume,  
Hugged by the woods and kissed by the  
sea ! 51

Where is the Eden like to thee ?  
For that 'couple of hundred years, or so,'  
There had been no peace in the world below;  
The witches still grumbling, 'It is n't fair;  
Come, give us a taste of the upper air !

We've had enough of your sulphur springs,  
 And the evil odor that round them clings;  
 We long for a drink that is cool and  
     nice, —  
 Great buckets of water with Wenham ice;  
 We've served you well up-stairs, you  
     know; 61  
 You're a good old — fellow — come, let us  
     go !'

I don't feel sure of his being good,  
 But he happened to be in a pleasant  
     mood, —  
 As fiends with their skins full sometimes  
     are  
 (He'd been drinking with 'roughs' at a  
     Boston bar).  
 So what does he do but up and shout  
 To a graybeard turnkey, 'Let 'em out !'

To mind his orders was all he knew;  
 The gates swung open, and out they flew. 70  
 'Where are our broomsticks?' the beldams  
     cried.  
 'Here are your broomsticks,' an imp re-  
     plied.  
 'They've been in — the place you know —  
     so long  
 They smell of brimstone uncommon strong;  
 But they've gained by being left alone, —  
 Just look, and you'll see how tall they've  
     grown.'  
 'And where is my cat?' a vixen squalled.  
 'Yes, where are our cats?' the witches  
     bawled,  
 And began to call them all by name:  
 As fast as they called the cats, they came:  
 There was bob-tailed Tommy and long-  
     tailed Tim, 81  
 And wall-eyed Jacky and green-eyed Jim,  
 And splay-foot Benny and slim-legged  
     Beau,  
 And Skinny and Squally, and Jerry and  
     Joe,  
 And many another that came at call, —  
 It would take too long to count them all.  
 All black, — one could hardly tell which  
     was which,  
 But every cat knew his own old witch;  
 And she knew hers as hers knew her, —  
 Ah, did n't they curl their tails and purr ! 90

No sooner the withered hags were free  
 Than out they swarmed for a midnight  
     spree;

I could n't tell all they did in rhymes,  
 But the Essex people had dreadful times.  
 The Swampscott fishermen still relate  
 How a strange sea-monster stole their bait;  
 How their nets were tangled in loops and  
     knots,  
 And they found dead crabs in their lobster-  
     pots.  
 Poor Danvers grieved for her blasted crops,  
 And Wilmington mourned over mildewed  
     hops. 100  
 A blight played havoc with Beverly  
     beans, —  
 It was all the work of those hateful queans !  
 A dreadful panic began at 'Pride's,'  
 Where the witches stopped in their mid-  
     night rides,  
 And there rose strange rumors and vague  
     alarms  
 'Mid the peaceful dwellers at Beverly  
     Farms.

Now when the Boss of the Beldams found  
 That without his leave they were ramping  
     round,  
 He called, — they could hear him twenty  
     miles, 109  
 From Chelsea beach to the Misery Isles;  
 The deafest old granny knew his tone  
 Without the trick of the telephone.  
 'Come here, you witches ! Come here !'  
     says he, —  
 'At your games of old, without asking me !  
 I'll give you a little job to do  
 That will keep you stirring, you godless  
     crew !'

They came, of course, at their master's call,  
 The witches, the broomsticks, the cats, and  
     all;  
 He led the hags to a railway train  
 The horses were trying to drag in vain. 120  
 'Now, then,' says he, 'you've had your  
     fun,  
 And here are the cars you've got to run.  
 The driver may just unhitch his team,  
 We don't want horses, we don't want  
     steam;  
 You may keep your old black cats to hug,  
 But the loaded train you've got to lug.'

Since then on many a car you'll see  
 A broomstick plain as plain can be;  
 On every stick there's a witch astride, —  
 The string you see to her leg is tied. 130

She will do a mischief if she can,  
But the string is held by a careful man,  
And whenever the evil-minded witch  
Would cut some caper, he gives a twitch.  
As for the hag, you can't see her,  
But hark! you can hear her black cat's  
purr,  
And now and then, as a car goes by,  
You may catch a gleam from her wicked  
eye.

Often you've looked on a rushing train,  
But just what moved it was not so plain.  
It could n't be those wires above, <sup>141</sup>  
For they could neither pull nor shove;  
Where was the motor that made it go  
You could n't guess, *but now you know.*

Remember my rhymes when you ride again  
On the rattling rail by the broomstick  
train!

1890.

1890.

### INVITA MINERVA<sup>1</sup>

VEX not the Muse with idle prayers, —  
She will not hear thy call;  
She steals upon thee unawares,  
Or seeks thee not at all.

Soft as the moonbeams when they sought  
Endymion's fragrant bower,  
She parts the whispering leaves of thought  
To show her full-blown flower.

For thee her wooing hour has passed,  
The singing birds have flown,  
And winter comes with icy blast  
To chill thy buds unblown.

Yet, though the woods no longer thrill  
As once their arches rung,

<sup>1</sup> I find the burden and restrictions of rhyme more and more troublesome as I grow older. There are times when it seems natural enough to employ that form of expression, but it is only occasionally; and the use of it as a vehicle of the commonplace is so prevalent that one is not much tempted to select it as the medium for his thoughts and emotions. The art of rhyming has almost become a part of a high-school education, and its practice is far from being an evidence of intellectual distinction. Mediocrity is as much forbidden to the poet in our days as it was in those of Horace, and the immense majority of the verses written are stamped with hopeless mediocrity.

When one of the ancient poets found he was trying to grind out verses which came unwillingly, he said he was writing *Invita Minerva*. (Holmes, in *Over the Tea-Cups*, introducing the poem.)

Sweet echoes hover round thee still  
Of songs thy summer sung.

Live in thy past; await no more  
The rush of heaven-sent wings;  
Earth still has music left in store  
While Memory sighs and sings.

1890.

1890.

### JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

1819-1891

THOU shouldst have sung the swan-song  
for the choir  
That filled our groves with music till the  
day  
Lit the last hilltop with its reddening fire,  
And evening listened for thy lingering  
lay.

But thou hast found thy voice in realms  
afar  
Where strains celestial blend their notes  
with thine;  
Some cloudless sphere beneath a happier  
star  
Welcomes the bright-winged spirit we  
resign.

How Nature mourns thee in the still re-  
treat  
Where passed in peace thy love-enchanted  
hours!  
Where shall she find an eye like thine to  
greet  
Spring's earliest footprints on her open-  
ing flowers?

Have the pale wayside weeds no fond re-  
gret  
For him who read the secrets they en-  
fold?  
Shall the proud spangles of the field forget  
The verse that lent new glory to their  
gold?

And ye whose carols wooed his infant  
ear,  
Whose chants with answering woodnotes  
he repaid,  
Have ye no song his spirit still may hear  
From Elmwood's vaults of overarching  
shade?

Friends of his studious hours, who thronged  
to teach  
The deep-read scholar all your varied  
lore,  
Shall he no longer seek your shelves to  
reach  
The treasure missing from his world-  
wide store?

—  
This singer whom we long have held so dear  
Was Nature's darling, shapely, strong,  
and fair;  
Of keenest wit, of judgment crystal-clear,  
Easy of converse, courteous, debonair,  
Fit for the loftiest or the lowliest lot,  
Self-poised, imperial, yet of simplest  
ways;  
At home alike in castle or in cot,  
True to his aim, let others blame or  
praise.

Freedom he found an heirloom from his  
sires;  
Song, letters, statecraft, shared his years  
in turn;  
All went to feed the nation's altar-fires  
Whose mourning children wreath his  
funeral urn.

He loved New England, — people, lan-  
guage, soil,  
Unweaned by exile from her arid breast.  
Farewell awhile, white-handed son of toil,  
Go with her brown-armed laborers to thy  
rest.

Peace to thy slumber in the forest shade!  
Poet and patriot, every gift was thine;  
Thy name shall live while summers bloom  
and fade,  
And grateful Memory guard thy leafy  
shrine!

1891.

1891.

### IN MEMORY OF JOHN GREEN- LEAF WHITTIER

DECEMBER 17, 1807—SEPTEMBER 7, 1892

THOU, too, hast left us. While with heads  
bowed low,  
And sorrowing hearts, we mourned our  
summer's dead,

The flying season bent its Parthian bow,  
And yet again our mingling tears were  
shed.

Was Heaven impatient that it could not  
wait  
The blasts of winter for earth's fruits to  
fall?  
Were angels crowding round the open gate  
To greet the spirits coming at their call?

Nay, let not fancies, born of old be-  
liefs,  
Play with the heart-beats that are throb-  
bing still,  
And waste their outworn phrases on the  
griefs,  
The silent griefs that words can only  
chill.

For thee, dear friend, there needs no high-  
wrought lay,  
To shed its aureole round thy cherished  
name, —  
Thou whose plain, home-born speech of  
*Yea and Nay*  
Thy truthful nature ever best became.

Death reaches not a spirit such as thine, —  
It can but steal the robe that hid thy  
wings;  
Though thy warm breathing presence we  
resign,  
Still in our hearts its loving semblance  
clings.

Peaceful thy message, yet for struggling  
right, —  
When Slavery's gauntlet in our face was  
flung, —  
While timid weaklings watched the dubi-  
ous fight  
No herald's challenge more defiant rung.

Yet was thy spirit tuned to gentle themes  
Sought in the haunts thy humble youth  
had known.  
Our stern New England's hills and vales  
and streams, —  
Thy tuneful idyls made them all their own.

The wild flowers springing from thy native  
sod  
Lent all their charms thy new-world  
song to fill, —

**G**ave thee the mayflower and the golden-  
rod  
To match the daisy and the daffodil.

**I**n the brave records of our earlier time  
A hero's deed thy generous soul inspired,  
**A**nd many a legend, told in ringing rhyme,  
The youthful soul with high resolve has  
fired.

**N**ot thine to lean on priesthood's broken  
reed;  
No barriers caged thee in a bigot's fold;  
**D**id zealots ask to syllable thy creed,  
Thou saidst 'Our Father,' and thy creed  
was told.

40

Best loved and saintliest of our singing  
train,  
Earth's noblest tributes to thy name be-  
long.

A lifelong record closed without a stain,  
A blameless memory shrined in deathless  
song.

Lift from its quarried ledge a flawless  
stone;  
Smooth the green turf and bid the tablet  
rise,

And on its snow-white surface carve alone  
These words, — he needs no more, —  
**HERE WHITTIER LIES.**

1892.

1892.



## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

### 'FOR THIS TRUE NOBLENES I SEEK IN VAIN'

'FOR this true nobleness I seek in vain,  
In woman and in man I find it not;  
I almost weary of my earthly lot,  
My life-springs are dried up with burning  
          pain.'  
Thou find'st it not? I pray thee look  
          again,  
Look *inward* through the depths of thine  
          own soul.  
How is it with thee? Art thou sound and  
          whole?  
Doth narrow search show thee no earthly  
          stain?  
BE NOBLE! and the nobleness that lies  
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,  
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;  
Then wilt thou see it gleam in many  
          eyes,  
Then will pure light around thy path be  
          shed,  
And thou wilt nevermore be sad and lone.  
1840. 1840.

### MY LOVE<sup>1</sup>

NOT as all other women are  
Is she that to my soul is dear;  
Her glorious fancies come from far,  
Beneath the silver evening-star,  
And yet her heart is ever near.  
  
Great feelings hath she of her own,  
Which lesser souls may never know;  
God giveth them to her alone,  
And sweet they are as any tone  
Wherewith the wind may choose to blow. 10  
  
Yet in herself she dwelleth not,  
Although no home were half so fair;  
No simplest duty is forgot,

<sup>1</sup> On the poems of 1840 and 1841, see Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. i, pp. 76-97.

Life hath no dim and lowly spot  
That doth not in her sunshine share.

She doeth little kindnesses,  
Which most leave undone, or despise:  
For naught that sets one heart at ease,  
And giveth happiness or peace,  
Is low-esteemed in her eyes. 20

She hath no scorn of common things,  
And, though she seem of other birth,  
Round us her heart intwines and clings,  
And patiently she folds her wings  
To tread the humble paths of earth.

Blessing she is: God made her so,  
And deeds of week-day holiness  
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,  
Nor hath she ever chanced to know  
That aught were easier than to bless. 30

She is most fair, and thereunto  
Her life doth rightly harmonize;  
Feeling or thought that was not true  
Ne'er made less beautiful the blue  
Unclouded heaven of her eyes.

She is a woman: one in whom  
The spring-time of her childish years  
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,  
Though knowing well that life hath room  
For many blights and many tears. 40

I love her with a love as still  
As a broad river's peaceful might,  
Which, by high tower and lowly mill,  
Seems following its own wayward will,  
And yet doth ever flow aright.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,  
Like quiet isles my duties lie;  
It flows around them and between,  
And makes them fresh and fair and  
          green,  
Sweet homes wherein to live and die. 50  
1840. 1840.

**'MY LOVE, I HAVE NO FEAR  
THAT THOU SHOULDST DIE'**

**MY** Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst  
die;  
**Albeit** I ask no fairer life than this,  
**Whose** numbering-clock is still thy gentle  
kiss,  
**While** Time and Peace with hands en-  
lockèd fly;  
**Yet** care I not where in Eternity  
**We** live and love, well knowing that there is  
**No** backward step for those who feel the  
bliss  
**Of** Faith as their most lofty yearnings  
high:  
**Love** hath so purified my being's core,  
**Meseems** I scarcely should be startled, even,  
**To** find, some morn, that thou hadst gone  
before;  
**Since**, with thy love, this knowledge too  
was given,  
**Which** each calm day doth strengthen  
more and more,  
**That** they who love are but one step from  
Heaven.

1841.

(1843.)

**'I ASK NOT FOR THOSE  
THOUGHTS, THAT SUDDEN  
LEAP'**

**I** ASK not for those thoughts, that sudden  
leap  
**From** being's sea, like the isle-seeming  
Kraken,  
**With** whose great rise the ocean all is  
shaken  
**And** a heart-tremble quivers through the  
deep;  
**Give** me that growth which some perchance  
deem sleep,  
**Wherewith** the steadfast coral-stems uprise,  
**Which**, by the toil of gathering energies,  
**Their** upward way into clear sunshine keep,  
**Until**, by Heaven's sweetest influences,  
**Slowly** and slowly spreads a speck of green  
**Into** a pleasant island in the seas,  
**Where**, 'mid tall palms, the cane-roofed  
home is seen,  
**And** wearied men shall sit at sunset's hour,  
**Hearing** the leaves and loving God's dear  
power.

1841.

(1843.)

**'GREAT TRUTHS ARE PORTIONS  
OF THE SOUL OF MAN'**

**GREAT** Truths are portions of the soul of  
man;  
**Great** souls are portions of Eternity;  
**Each** drop of blood that e'er through true  
heart ran  
**With** lofty message, ran for thee and  
me;  
**For** God's law, since the starry song  
began,  
**Hath** been, and still forevermore must  
be,  
**That** every deed which shall outlast Time's  
span  
**Must** spur the soul to be erect and free;  
**Slave** is no word of deathless lineage  
sprung;  
**Too** many noble souls have thought and  
died,  
**Too** many mighty poets lived and sung,  
**And** our good Saxon, from lips purified  
**With** martyr-fire, throughout the world  
hath rung  
**Too** long to have God's holy cause denied.

1841.

1842.

**TO THE SPIRIT OF KEATS**

**GREAT** soul, thou sittest with me in my  
room,  
**Uplifting** me with thy vast, quiet eyes,  
**On** whose full orbs, with kindly lustre,  
lies  
**The** twilight warmth of ruddy ember-  
gloom:  
**Thy** clear, strong tones will oft bring sud-  
den bloom  
**Of** hope secure, to him who lonely cries,  
**Wrestling** with the young poet's agonies,  
**Neglect** and scorn, which seem a certain  
doom:  
**Yes!** the few words which, like great  
thunder-drops,  
**Thy** large heart down to earth shook doubt-  
fully,  
**Thrilled** by the inward lightning of its  
might,  
**Serene** and pure, like gushing joy of light,  
**Shall** track the eternal chords of Des-  
tiny,  
**After** the moon-led pulse of ocean stops.

1841.

1842.

**'OUR LOVE IS NOT A FADING  
EARTHLY FLOWER'**

OUR love is not a fading earthly flower:  
Its wingèd seed dropped down from Para-  
dise,  
And, nursed by day and night, by sun and  
shower,  
Doth momentarily to fresher beauty rise:  
To us the leafless autumn is not bare,  
Nor winter's rattling boughs lack lusty  
green.  
Our summer hearts make summer's ful-  
ness, where  
No leaf, or bud, or blossom may be seen:  
For nature's life in love's deep life doth lie,  
Love, — whose forgetfulness is beauty's  
death,  
Whose mystic key these cells of Thou and I  
Into the infinite freedom openeth,  
And makes the body's dark and narrow  
grate  
The wide-flung leaves of Heaven's own  
palace-gate.

1842.

1843.

**'BELOVED, IN THE NOISY CITY  
HERE'**

BELOVED, in the noisy city here,  
The thought of thee can make all turmoil  
cease;  
Around my spirit, folds thy spirit clear  
Its still, soft arms, and circles it with peace;  
There is no room for any doubt or fear  
In souls so overfilled with love's increase,  
There is no memory of the bygone year  
But growth in heart's and spirit's perfect  
ease:  
How hath our love, half nebulous at first,  
Rounded itself into a full-orbed sun!  
How have our lives and wills (as haply erst  
They were, ere this forgetfulness begun)  
Through all their earthly distances out-  
burst,  
And melted, like two rays of light in one!

1842.

(1843.)

**SONG**

O MOONLIGHT deep and tender,  
A year and more ago,  
Your mist of golden splendor  
Round my betrothal shone!

O elm-leaves dark and dewy,  
The very same ye seem,  
The low wind trembles through ye,  
Ye murmur in my dream!

O river, dim with distance,  
Flow thus forever by,  
A part of my existence  
Within your heart doth lie!

O stars, ye saw our meeting,  
Two beings and one soul,  
Two hearts so madly beating  
To mingle and be whole!

O happy night, deliver  
Her kisses back to me,  
Or keep them all, and give her  
A blissful dream of me!

1842.

(1843.)

**THE SHEPHERD OF KING AD-  
METUS**

THERE came a youth upon the earth,  
Some thousand years ago,  
Whose slender hands were nothing worth,  
Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell  
He stretched some chords, and drew  
Music that made men's bosoms swell  
Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had  
Pure taste by right divine,  
Decreed his singing not too bad  
To hear between the cups of wine:

19

And so, well pleased with being soothed  
Into a sweet half-sleep,  
Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,  
And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,  
And yet he used them so,  
That what in other mouths was rough  
In his seemed musical and low.

20

Men called him but a shiftless youth,  
In whom no good they saw;  
And yet, unwittingly, in truth,  
They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,  
 For idly, hour by hour,  
 He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,  
 Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things  
 Did teach him all their use, 30  
 For, in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,  
 He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,  
 But, when a glance they caught  
 Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,  
 They laughed, and called him good-for-naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,  
 And e'en his memory dim,  
 Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,  
 More full of love, because of him. 40

And day by day more holy grew  
 Each spot where he had trod,  
 Till after-poets only knew  
 Their first-born brother as a god. 1842.

#### AN INCIDENT IN A RAILROAD CAR

He spoke of Burns: men rude and rough  
 Pressed round to hear the praise of one  
 Whose heart was made of manly, simple  
 stuff,  
 As homespun as their own.

And, when he read, they forward leaned,  
 Drinking, with thirsty hearts and ears,  
 His brook-like songs whom glory never  
 weaned  
 From humble smiles and tears.

Slowly there grew a tender awe,  
 Sun-like, o'er faces brown and hard, 10  
 As if in him who read they felt and saw  
 Some presence of the bard.

It was a sight for sin and wrong  
 And slavish tyranny to see,  
 A sight to make our faith more pure and  
 strong  
 In high humanity.

I thought, these men will carry hence  
 Promptings their former life above,

And something of a finer reverence  
 For beauty, truth, and love. 20

God scatters love on every side  
 Freely among his children all,  
 And always hearts are lying open wide,  
 Wherein some grains may fall.

There is no wind but soweth seeds  
 Of a more true and open life,  
 Which burst, unlooked for, into high-souled  
 deeds,  
 With wayside beauty rife.

We find within these souls of ours  
 Some wild germs of a higher birth, 30  
 Which in the poet's tropic heart bear flowers  
 Whose fragrance fills the earth.

Within the hearts of all men lie  
 These promises of wider bliss,  
 Which blossom into hopes that cannot die,  
 In sunny hours like this.

All that hath been majestic  
 In life or death, since time began,  
 Is native in the simple heart of all,  
 The angel heart of man. 40

And thus, among the untaught poor,  
 Great deeds and feelings find a home,  
 That cast in shadow all the golden lore  
 Of classic Greece and Rome.

O mighty brother-soul of man,  
 Where'er thou art, in low or high,  
 Thy skyey arches with exulting span  
 O'er-roof infinity !

All thoughts that mould the age begin  
 Deep down within the primitive soul, 50  
 And from the many slowly upward win  
 To one who grasps the whole:

In his wide brain the feeling deep  
 That struggled on the many's tongue  
 Swells to a tide of thought, whose surges  
 leap  
 O'er the weak thrones of wrong.

All thought begins in feeling, — wide  
 In the great mass its base is hid,  
 And, narrowing up to thought, stands  
 glorified,  
 A moveless pyramid. 60

Nor is he far astray, who deems  
That every hope, which rises and grows  
broad  
In the world's heart, by ordered impulse  
streams  
From the great heart of God.

God wills, man hopes: in common souls  
Hope is but vague and undefined,  
Till from the poet's tongue the message  
rolls  
A blessing to his kind.

Never did Poesy appear  
So full of heaven to me, as when 70  
I saw how it would pierce through pride  
and fear  
To the lives of coarsest men.

It may be glorious to write  
Thoughts that shall glad the two or  
three  
High souls, like those far stars that come  
in sight  
Once in a century; —

But better far it is to speak  
One simple word, which now and then  
Shall waken their free nature in the weak  
And friendless sons of men; 80

To write some earnest verse or line,  
Which, seeking not the praise of art,  
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood  
shine  
In the untutored heart.

He who doth this, in verse or prose,  
May be forgotten in his day,  
But surely shall be crowned at last with  
those  
Who live and speak for aye.

1842.

1842.

STANZAS ON FREEDOM<sup>1</sup>

MEN! whose boast it is that ye  
Come of fathers brave and free,

<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered that in publicly espousing the cause of abolition so early as 1843 Lowell made personal and social sacrifices even greater than Whittier's. See his passage on Whittier, and that on himself, in the 'Fable for Critics'; and Bowdler's *Life of Lowell*, vol. 1, pp. 105, 168-175, 211 and following, and especially 183, 184, where Lowell speaks in particular of these 'Stanzas on Freedom,' which were written for an anti-

If there breathe on earth a slave,  
Are ye truly free and brave?  
If ye do not feel the chain,  
When it works a brother's pain,  
Are ye not base slaves indeed,  
Slaves unworthy to be freed?

Women! who shall one day bear  
Sons to breathe New England air,  
If ye hear, without a blush,  
Deeds to make the roused blood rush  
Like red lava through your veins,  
For your sisters now in chains, —  
Answer! are ye fit to be  
Mothers of the brave and free?

Is true Freedom but to break  
Fetters for our own dear sake,  
And, with leathern hearts, forget  
That we owe mankind a debt? 20  
No! true freedom is to share  
All the chains our brothers wear,  
And, with heart and hand, to be  
Earnest to make others free!

They are slaves who fear to speak  
For the fallen and the weak;  
They are slaves who will not choose  
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think;  
They are slaves who dare not be 31  
In the right with two or three.

1843.

1843.

## WENDELL PHILLIPS

HE stood upon the world's broad thresh-  
old; wide  
The din of battle and of slaughter rose;

slavery reunion held on the anniversary of West Indian Emancipation, and were first printed under the title given in this letter: 'This puts me in mind of Longfellow's suppression of his anti-slavery pieces. [These had been omitted in one edition of Longfellow's poems, published at Philadelphia.] Sydney Gay wishes to know whether I think he spoke too harshly of the affair. I think he *did* . . . and this not because I agree with what he tells me is your notion of the matter . . . — for I do not think that an author has a right to suppress anything that God has given him — but because I believe that Longfellow esteemed them of inferior quality to his other poems. For myself, when I was printing my second volume of poems, Owen wished to suppress a certain "Song sung at an Anti-Slavery Picnic." I never saw him, but he urged me with I know not what worldly arguments. My only answer was: "Let all the others be suppressed if you will — that I will never suppress."'

He saw God stand upon the weaker side,  
 That sank in seeming loss before its foes:  
 Many there were who made great haste  
     and sold  
 Unto the cunning enemy their swords,  
 He scorned their gifts of fame, and power,  
     and gold,  
 And, underneath their soft and flowery  
     words,  
 Heard the cold serpent hiss; therefore he  
     went  
 And humbly joined him to the weaker  
     part,  
 Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content  
 So he could be the nearer to God's heart,  
 And feel its solemn pulses sending blood  
 Through all the widespread veins of end-  
     less good.

(1843.)

RHÆCUS<sup>1</sup>

GOD sends his teachers unto every age,  
 To every clime, and every race of men,  
 With revelations fitted to their growth  
 And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of  
     Truth  
 Into the selfish rule of one sole race:  
 Therefore each form of worship that hath  
     swayed  
 The life of man, and given it to grasp  
 The master-key of knowledge, reverence,  
 Infolds some germs of goodness and of  
     right;  
 Else never had the eager soul, which  
     loathes  
 The slothful down of pampered ignorance,  
 Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart  
 Which makes that all the fables it hath  
     coined,  
 To justify the reign of its belief  
 And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,  
 Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,  
 Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful  
     hands,  
 Points surely to the hidden springs of truth.  
 For, as in nature naught is made in vain,  
 But all things have within their hull of  
     use  
 A wisdom and a meaning which may speak  
 Of spiritual secrets to the ear  
 Of spirit; so, in whatso'er the heart

<sup>1</sup> Compare Landor's 'The Hamadryad.'

Hath fashioned for a solace to itself,  
 To make its inspirations suit its creed,  
 And from the niggard hands of falsehood  
     wring  
 Its needful food of truth, there ever is  
 A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,  
 Not less than her own works, pure gleams  
     of light  
 And earnest parables of inward lore.  
 Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,  
 As full of gracious youth, and beauty still  
 As the immortal freshness of that grace  
 Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.

A youth named Rhæcus, wandering in  
     the wood,  
 Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,  
 And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,  
 He propped its gray trunk with admiring  
     care,  
 And with a thoughtless footstep loitered  
     on.  
 But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind  
 That murmured 'Rhæcus!' 'T was as if  
     the leaves,  
 Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured  
     it,  
 And, while he paused bewildered, yet again  
 It murmured 'Rhæcus!' softer than a  
     breeze.  
 He started and beheld with dizzy eyes  
 What seemed the substance of a happy  
     dream  
 Stand there before him, spreading a warm  
     glow  
 Within the green glooms of the shadowy  
     oak.  
 It seemed a woman's shape, yet far too  
     fair  
 To be a woman, and with eyes too meek  
 For any that were wont to mate with gods.  
 All naked like a goddess stood she there,  
 And like a goddess all too beautiful  
 To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.  
 'Rhæcus, I am the Dryad of this tree,'  
 Thus she began, dropping her low-toned  
     words  
 Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of  
     dew,  
 'And with it I am doomed to live and die;  
 The rain and sunshine are my caterers,  
 Nor have I other bliss than simple life;  
 Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can  
     give,  
 And with a thankful joy it shall be thine.'

Then Rhœcus, with a flutter at the heart,  
 Yet by the prompting of such beauty bold,  
 Answered: 'What is there that can satisfy  
 The endless craving of the soul but love?  
 Give me thy love, or but the hope of that  
 Which must be evermore my nature's goal.'  
 After a little pause she said again, <sup>70</sup>  
 But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,  
 'I give it, Rhœcus, though a perilous gift;  
 An hour before the sunset meet me here.'  
 And straightway there was nothing he  
 could see  
 But the green glooms beneath the shadowy  
 oak,  
 And not a sound came to his straining ears  
 But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,  
 And far away upon an emerald slope  
 The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now, in those days of simpleness and  
 faith, <sup>80</sup>  
 Men did not think that happy things were  
 dreams  
 Because they overstepped the narrow bourn  
 Of likelihood, but reverently deemed  
 Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful  
 To be the guerdon of a daring heart.  
 So Rhœcus made no doubt that he was blest,  
 And all along unto the city's gate  
 Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he  
 walked,  
 The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its  
 wont,  
 And he could scarce believe he had not  
 wings, <sup>90</sup>  
 Such sunshine seemed to glitter through  
 his veins  
 Instead of blood, so light he felt and  
 strange.

Young Rhœcus had a faithful heart  
 enough,  
 But one that in the present dwelt too  
 much,  
 And, taking with blithe welcome whatso-  
 e'er  
 Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in  
 that,  
 Like the contented peasant of a vale,  
 Deemed it the world, and never looked  
 beyond.  
 So, haply meeting in the afternoon  
 Some comrades who were playing at the  
 dice, <sup>100</sup>  
 He joined them, and forgot all else beside.

The dice were rattling at the merriest,  
 And Rhœcus, who had met but sorry luck,  
 Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,  
 When through the room there hummed a  
 yellow bee  
 That buzzed about his ear with down-  
 dropped legs  
 As if to light. And Rhœcus laughed and  
 said,  
 Feeling how red and flushed he was with  
 loss,  
 'By Venus! does he take me for a rose?'  
 And brushed him off with rough, impatient  
 hand. <sup>110</sup>  
 But still the bee came back, and thrice  
 again  
 Rhœcus did beat him off with growing  
 wrath.  
 Then through the window flew the wounded  
 bee,  
 And Rhœcus, tracking him with angry  
 eyes,  
 Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly  
 Against the red disk of the setting sun,—  
 And instantly the blood sank from his  
 heart,  
 As if its very walls had caved away.  
 Without a word he turned, and, rushing  
 forth,  
 Ran madly through the city and the gate,  
 And o'er the plain, which now the wood's  
 long shade, <sup>120</sup>  
 By the low sun thrown forward broad and  
 dim,  
 Darkened wellnigh unto the city's wall.

Quite spent and out of breath he reached  
 the tree,  
 And, listening fearfully, he heard once  
 more  
 The low voice murmur 'Rhœcus!' close at  
 hand:  
 Whereat he looked around him, but could  
 see  
 Naught but the deepening glooms beneath  
 the oak.  
 Then sighed the voice, 'O Rhœcus! never-  
 more  
 Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,  
 Me, who would fain have blessed thee with  
 a love <sup>130</sup>  
 More ripe and bounteous than ever yet  
 Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:  
 But thou didst scorn my humble mes-  
 senger,



And sent'st him back to me with bruised wings.

We spirits only show to gentle eyes,  
We ever ask an undivided love,  
And he who scorns the least of Nature's works  
Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.  
Farewell! for thou canst never see me more.' 140

Then Rhæcus beat his breast, and groaned aloud,  
And cried, 'Be pitiful! forgive me yet  
This once, and I shall never need it more!' 'Alas!' the voice returned, 't is thou art blind,  
Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,  
But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;  
Only the soul hath power o'er itself.'  
With that again there murmured 'Nevermore!'

And Rhæcus after heard no other sound,  
Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves, 150

Like the long surf upon a distant shore,  
Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.  
The night had gathered round him: o'er the plain

The city sparkled with its thousand lights,  
And sounds of revel fell upon his ear  
Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,  
With all its bright sublimity of stars,  
Deepened, and on his forehead smote the breeze:

Beauty was all around him and delight,  
But from that eve he was alone on earth. 160  
(1843.)

### TO THE DANDELION

DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way,  
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,  
First pledge of blithesome May,  
Which children pluck, and full of pride uphold,  
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they  
An Eldorado in the grass have found,  
Which not the rich earth's ample round  
May match in wealth, thou art more dear to me  
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow 10  
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,  
Nor wrinkled the lean brow  
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;  
'T is the Spring's largess, which she scatters now  
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,  
Though most hearts never understand  
To take it at God's value, but pass by  
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;  
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime; 20  
The eyes thou givest me  
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:

Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee  
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment

In the white lily's breezy tent,  
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first  
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,  
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,  
Where, as the breezes pass, 30  
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,  
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,  
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue  
That from the distance sparkle through  
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,  
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee;  
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,  
Who, from the dark old tree  
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long, 40  
And I, secure in childish piety,  
Listened as if I heard an angel sing  
With news from heaven, which he could bring  
Fresh every day to my untainted ears  
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,  
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!  
Thou teachest me to deem

More sacredly of every human heart,  
 Since each reflects in joy its scanty  
     gleam<sup>50</sup>  
 Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret  
     show,  
 Did we but pay the love we owe,  
 And with a child's undoubting wisdom  
     look  
 On all these living pages of God's book.  
 1844? 1845.

## COLUMBUS

THE cordage creaks and rattles in the  
     wind,  
 With whims of sudden hush; the reeling  
     sea  
 Now thumps like solid rock beneath the  
     stern,  
 Now leaps with clumsy wrath, strikes  
     short, and falling,  
 Crumbled to whispering foam, slips rustling  
     down  
 The broad backs of the waves, which jostle  
     and crowd  
 To fling themselves upon that unknown  
     shore,  
 Their used familiar since the dawn of  
     time,  
 Whither this foredoomed life is guided on  
 To sway on triumph's hushed, aspiring  
     poise<sup>10</sup>  
 One glittering moment, then to break ful-  
     filled.

How lonely is the sea's perpetual swing,  
 The melancholy wash of endless waves,  
 The sigh of some grim monster undescried,  
 Fear-painted on the canvas of the dark,  
 Shifting on his uneasy pillow of brine!  
 Yet night brings more companions than the  
     day  
 To this drear waste; new constellations  
     burn,  
 And fairer stars, with whose calm height  
     my soul  
 Finds nearer sympathy than with my herd<sup>20</sup>  
 Of earthen souls, whose vision's scanty ring  
 Makes me its prisoner to beat my wings  
 Against the cold bars of their unbelief,  
 Knowing in vain my own free heaven be-  
     yond.  
 O God! this world, so crammed with eager  
     life,

That comes and goes and wanders back to  
     silence  
 Like the idle wind, which yet man's shap-  
     ing mind  
 Can make his drudge to swell the longing  
     sails  
 Of highest endeavor, — this mad, unthrif-  
     world,  
 Which, every hour, throws life enough  
     away<sup>25</sup>  
 To make her deserts kind and hospitable,  
 Lets her great destinies be waved aside  
 By smooth, lip-reverent, formal infidels,  
 Who weigh the God they not believe with  
     gold,  
 And find no spot in Judas, save that he,  
 Driving a duller bargain than he ought,  
 Saddled his guild with too cheap precedent.  
 O Faith! if thou art strong, thine opposite  
 Is mighty also, and the dull fool's sneer  
 Hath oftentimes shot chill palsy through the  
     arm<sup>30</sup>  
 Just lifted to achieve its crowning deed,  
 And made the firm-based heart, that would  
     have quailed  
 The rack or fagot, shudder like a leaf  
 Wrinkled with frost, and loose upon its  
     stem.  
 The wicked and the weak, by some dark  
     law,  
 Have a strange power to shut and rivet  
     down  
 Their own horizon round us, to unwing  
 Our heaven-aspiring visions, and to blur  
 With surly clouds the Future's gleaming  
     peaks,  
 Far seen across the brine of thankless  
     years.<sup>35</sup>  
 If the chosen soul could never be alone  
 In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,  
 No greatness ever had been dreamed or  
     done;  
 Among dull hearts a prophet never grew;  
 The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.

The old world is effete; there man with  
     man  
 Jostles, and, in the brawl for means to live,  
 Life is trod underfoot, — Life, the one  
     block  
 Of marble that's vouchsafed wherefrom to  
     carve  
 Our great thoughts, white and godlike, to  
     shine down<sup>40</sup>  
 The future, Life, the irredeemable block,

Which one o'er-hasty chisel-dint oft mars,  
 Scanting our room to cut the features out  
 Of our full hope, so forcing us to crown  
 With a mean head the perfect limbs, or  
 leave  
 The god's face glowing o'er a satyr's trunk,  
 Failure's brief epitaph.

Yes, Europe's world  
 Reels on to judgment; there the common  
 need,  
 Losing God's sacred use, to be a bond  
 Twixt Me and Thee, sets each one scowl-  
 ingly 70  
 O'er his own selfish hoard at bay; no state,  
 Knit strongly with eternal fibres up  
 Of all men's separate and united weals,  
 Self-poised and sole as stars, yet one as  
 light,  
 Holds up a shape of large Humanity  
 To which by natural instinct every man  
 Pays loyalty exulting, by which all  
 Mould their own lives, and feel their pulses  
 filled  
 With the red, fiery blood of the general  
 life,  
 Making them mighty in peace, as now in  
 war 80  
 They are, even in the flush of victory,  
 weak,  
 Conquering that manhood which should  
 them subdue.  
 And what gift bring I to this untried  
 world?  
 Shall the same tragedy be played anew,  
 And the same lurid curtain drop at last  
 On one dread desolation, one fierce crash  
 Of that recoil which on its makers God  
 Lets Ignorance and Sin and Hunger make,  
 Early or late? Or shall that common-  
 wealth  
 Whose potent unity and concentric force  
 Can draw these scattered joints and parts  
 of men 90  
 Into a whole ideal man once more,  
 Which sucks not from its limbs the life  
 away,  
 But sends it flood-tide and creates itself  
 Over again in every citizen,  
 Be there built up? For me, I have no  
 choice;  
 I might turn back to other destinies,  
 For one sincere key opens all Fortune's doors;  
 But whoso answers not God's earliest call  
 Forfeits or dulls that faculty supreme 100

Of lying open to his genius  
 Which makes the wise heart certain of its  
 ends.

Here am I; for what end God knows, not I;  
 Westward still points the inexorable soul:  
 Here am I, with no friend but the sad sea,  
 The beating heart of this great enterprise,  
 Which, without me, would stiffen in swift  
 death;  
 This have I mused on, since mine eye could  
 first 108  
 Among the stars distinguish and with joy  
 Rest on that God-fed Pharos of the north,  
 On some blue promontory of heaven lighted  
 That juts far out into the upper sea;  
 To this one hope my heart hath clung for  
 years,  
 As would a foundling to the talisman  
 Hung round his neck by hands he knew  
 not whose;  
 A poor, vile thing and dross to all beside,  
 Yet he therein can feel a virtue left  
 By the sad pressure of a mother's hand,  
 And unto him it still is tremulous 119  
 With palpitating haste and wet with tears,  
 The key to him of hope and humanness,  
 The coarse shell of life's pearl, Expectancy.  
 This hope hath been to me for love and  
 fame,  
 Hath made me wholly lonely on the earth,  
 Building me up as in a thick-ribbed tower,  
 Wherewith enwalled my watching spirit  
 burned,  
 Conquering its little island from the Dark,  
 Sole as a scholar's lamp, and heard men's  
 steps,  
 In the far hurry of the outward world,  
 Pass dimly forth and back, sounds heard in  
 dream. 130  
 As Ganymede by the eagle was snatched  
 up  
 From the gross sod to be Jove's cup-bearer,  
 So was I lifted by my great design:  
 And who hath trod Olympus, from his eye  
 Fades not that broader outlook of the gods;  
 His life's low valleys overbrow earth's  
 clouds,  
 And that Olympian spectre of the past  
 Looms towering up in sovereign memory,  
 Beckoning his soul from meaner heights of  
 doom.  
 Had but the shadow of the Thunderer's  
 bird, 140  
 Flashing athwart my spirit, made of me

A swift-betraying vision's Ganymede,  
Yet to have greatly dreamed precludes low  
ends;

Great days have ever such a morning-red,  
On such a base great futures are built up,  
And aspiration, though not put in act,  
Comes back to ask its plighted troth again,  
Still watches round its grave the unlaid  
ghost

Of a dead virtue, and makes other hopes,  
Save that implacable one, seem thin and  
bleak 150

As shadows of bare trees upon the snow,  
Bound freezing there by the un pitying  
moon.

While other youths perplexed their mando-  
lins,

Praying that Thetis would her fingers twine  
In the loose glories of her lover's hair,  
And wile another kiss to keep back day,  
I, stretched beneath the many-centuried  
shade

Of some writhed oak, the wood's Laocoön,  
Did of my hope a dryad mistress make,  
Whom I would woo to meet me privily, 160  
Or underneath the stars, or when the moon  
Flecked all the forest floor with scattered  
pearls.

O days whose memory tames to fawning  
down

The surly fell of Ocean's bristled neck !

I know not when this hope enthralled me  
first,

But from my boyhood up I loved to hear  
The tall pine-forests of the Apennine  
Murmur their hoary legends of the sea,  
Which hearing, I in vision clear beheld  
The sudden dark of tropic night shut  
down 170

O'er the huge whisper of great watery  
wastes,

The while a pair of herons trailingy  
Flapped inland, where some league-wide  
river hurled

The yellow spoil of unconjectured realms  
Far through a gulf's green silence, never  
scarred

By any but the North-wind's hurrying  
keels.

And not the pines alone ; all sights and  
sounds

To my world-seeking heart paid fealty,  
And catered for it as the Cretan bees

Brought honey to the baby Jupiter, 180  
Who in his soft hand crushed a violet,  
Godlike foremusing the rough thunder's  
gripe;

Then did I entertain the poet's song,  
My great Idea's guest, and, passing o'er  
That iron bridge the Tuscan built to hell,  
I heard Ulysses tell of mountain-chains  
Whose adamantine links, his manacles,  
The western main shook growling, and still  
gnawed.

I brooded on the wise Athenian's tale  
Of happy Atlantis, and heard Björne's  
keel 190

Crunch' the gray pebbles of the Vinland  
shore:

I listened, musing, to the prophecy  
Of Nero's tutor-victim; lo, the birds  
Sing darkling, conscious of the climbing  
dawn.

And I believed the poets; it is they  
Who utter wisdom from the central deep,  
And, listening to the inner flow of things,  
Speak to the age out of eternity.

Ah me ! old hermits sought for solitude  
In caves and desert places of the earth, 200  
Where their own heart-beat was the only  
stir

Of living thing that comforted the year;  
But the bald pillar-top of Simeon,  
In midnight's blankest waste, were popu-  
lous,

Matched with the isolation drear and deep  
Of him who pines among the swarm of  
men,

At once a new thought's king and pris-  
oner,

Feeling the truer life within his life,  
The fountain of his spirit's prophecy,  
Sinking away and wasting, drop by drop, 210  
In the ungrateful sands of sceptic ears.  
He in the palace-aisles of untrod woods  
Doth walk a king ; for him the pent-up  
cell

Widens beyond the circles of the stars,  
And all the sceptred spirits of the past  
Come thronging in to greet him as their  
peer;

But in the market-place's glare and throng  
He sits apart, an exile, and his brow  
Aches with the mocking memory of its  
crown.

Yet to the spirit select there is no choice;  
He cannot say, This will I do, or that, 220

For the cheap means putting Heaven's ends  
 in pawn,  
 And bartering his bleak rocks, the freehold  
 stern  
 Of destiny's first-born, for smoother fields  
 That yield no crop of self-denying will;  
 A hand is stretched to him from out the  
 dark,  
 Which grasping without question, he is led  
 Where there is work that he must do for  
 God.

The trial still is the strength's complement,  
 And the uncertain, dizzy path that scales 230  
 The sheer heights of supremest purposes  
 Is steeper to the angel than the child.

Chances have laws as fixed as planets have,  
 And disappointment's dry and bitter root,  
 Envy's harsh berries, and the choking pool  
 Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-  
 milk

To the tough hearts that pioneer their kind,  
 And break a pathway to those unknown  
 realms

That in the earth's broad shadow lie en-  
 thralled;

Endurance is the crowning quality, 240  
 And patience all the passion of great hearts;  
 These are their stay, and when the leaden  
 world

Sets its hard face against their fateful  
 thought,

And brute strength, like the Gaulish con-  
 queror,

Clangs his huge glaive down in the other  
 scale,

The inspired soul but flings his patience in,  
 And slowly that outweighs the ponderous  
 globe, —

One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,  
 One soul against the flesh of all mankind.

Thus ever seems it when my soul can hear  
 The voice that errs not; then my triumph  
 gleams, 251

O'er the blank ocean beckoning, and all  
 night

My heart flies on before me as I sail;  
 Far on I see my lifelong enterprise,  
 That rose like Ganges 'mid the freezing  
 snows

Of a world's solitude, sweep broadening  
 down,

And, gathering to itself a thousand streams,  
 Grow sacred ere it mingle with the sea;  
 I see the ungated wall of chaos old,

With blocks Cyclopean hewn of solid night,  
 Fade like a wreath of unreturning mist 261  
 Before the irreversible feet of light; —  
 And lo, with what clear omen in the east  
 On day's gray threshold stands the eager  
 dawn,  
 Like young Leander rosy from the sea  
 Glowing at Hero's lattice!

One day more  
 These muttering shoalbrains leave the  
 helm to me:

God, let me not in their dull ooze be  
 stranded;

Let not this one frail bark, to hollow  
 which

I have dug out the pith and sinewy heart  
 Of my aspiring life's fair trunk, be so 271  
 Cast up to warp and blacken in the sun,  
 Just as the opposing wind 'gins whistle off  
 His cheek-swollen pack, and from the lean-  
 ing mast

Fortune's full sail strains forward!

One poor day! —  
 Remember whose and not how short it is!  
 It is God's day, it is Columbus's.  
 A lavish day! One day, with life and  
 heart, 278

Is more than time enough to find a world.

1844.

(1847.)<sup>1</sup>

## THE PRESENT CRISIS<sup>2</sup>

WHEN a deed is done for Freedom, through  
 the broad earth's aching breast  
 Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling  
 on from east to west,

<sup>1</sup> Lowell's *Poems, Second Series*, dated 1848, was really published in 1847.

<sup>2</sup> Written when the annexation of Texas was being discussed, but universal in its application.

For twenty years the solemn monitory music of this poem never ceased to resound in public halls. In the Lowell Memorial Address which George William Curtis delivered before the Brooklyn Institute, February 22, 1892, he said in his heightened way of some passages of 'The Present Crisis': 'Wendell Phillips winged with their music and tipped with their flame the dart of his fervid appeal and manly scorn. As he quoted them with suppressed emotion in his low, melodious, penetrating voice, the white plume of the restless Navarre of eloquence gained a loftier grace, that relentless sword of invective a more flashing edge.' And the stanza of 'The Present Crisis' beginning 'For humanity sweeps onward' was made by Sumner the text and motif of that famous 'Crime against Speech' oration that provoked the assault of Preston Brooks. (Greenleaf's *Lowell*, pp. 79, 80.)

And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels  
 the soul within him climb  
 To the awful verge of manhood, as the  
 energy sublime  
 Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the  
 thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots  
 the instantaneous throe,  
 When the travail of the Ages wrings  
 earth's systems to and fro;  
 At the birth of each new Era, with a recog-  
 nizing start,  
 Nation wildly looks at nation, standing  
 with mute lips apart,  
 And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child  
 leaps beneath the Future's heart. 10

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a ter-  
 ror and a chill,  
 Under continent to continent, the sense of  
 coming ill,  
 And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels  
 his sympathies with God  
 In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be  
 drunk up by the sod,  
 Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delv-  
 ing in the nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an in-  
 stinct bears along,  
 Round the earth's electric circle, the swift  
 flash of right or wrong;  
 Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Hu-  
 manity's vast frame  
 Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the  
 gush of joy or shame; —  
 In the gain or loss of one race all the rest  
 have equal claim. 20

Once to every man and nation comes the  
 moment to decide,  
 In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for  
 the good or evil side;  
 Some great cause, God's new Messiah,  
 offering each the bloom or blight,  
 Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the  
 sheep upon the right,  
 And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that  
 darkness and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose  
 party thou shalt stand,  
 Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes  
 the dust against our land?

Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 't is  
 Truth alone is strong,  
 And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see  
 around her throng  
 Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield  
 her from all wrong. 30

Backward look across the ages and the  
 beacon-moments see,  
 That, like peaks of some sunk continent,  
 jut through Oblivion's sea;  
 Not an ear in court or market for the low  
 foreboding cry  
 Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers,  
 from whose feet earth's chaff must  
 fly;  
 Never shows the choice momentous till the  
 judgment bath passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's  
 pages but record  
 One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt  
 old systems and the Word;  
 Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong for-  
 ever on the throne, —  
 Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, be-  
 hind the dim unknown,  
 Standeth God within the shadow, keeping  
 watch above his own. 40

We see dimly in the Present what is small  
 and what is great,  
 Slow of faith, how weak an arm may turn  
 the iron helm of fate,  
 But the soul is still oracular; amid the  
 market's din,  
 List the ominous stern whisper from the  
 Delphic cave within, —  
 'They enslave their children's children who  
 make compromise with sin.'

Slavery, the earth-born Cyclops, fellest of  
 the giant brood,  
 Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who  
 have drenched the earth with blood,  
 Famished in his self-made desert, blinded  
 by our purer day,  
 Grotes in yet unblasted regions for his  
 miserable prey; —  
 Shall we guide his gory fingers where our  
 helpless children play? 50

Then to side with Truth is noble when we  
 share her wretched crust,



Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and  
 't is prosperous to be just;  
 Then it is the brave man chooses, while the  
 coward stands aside,  
 Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord  
 is crucified,  
 And the multitude make virtue of the faith  
 they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes, —  
 they were souls that stood alone,  
 While the men they agonized for hurled  
 the contumelious stone,  
 Stood serene, and down the future saw the  
 golden beam incline  
 To the side of perfect justice, mastered by  
 their faith divine,  
 By one man's plain truth to manhood and  
 to God's supreme design. 60

By the light of burning heretics Christ's  
 bleeding feet I track,  
 Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the  
 cross that turns not back,  
 And these mounts of anguish number how  
 each generation learned  
 One new word of that grand *Credo* which  
 in prophet-hearts hath burned  
 Since the first man stood God-conquered  
 with his face to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-  
 day the martyr stands,  
 On the morrow crouches Judas with the  
 silver in his hands;  
 Far in front the cross stands ready and the  
 crackling fagots burn,  
 While the hooting mob of yesterday in  
 silent awe return  
 To glean up the scattered ashes into His-  
 tory's golden urn. 70

'T is as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle  
 slaves  
 Of a legendary virtue carved upon our  
 father's graves,  
 Worshippers of light ancestral make the  
 present light a crime; —  
 Was the Mayflower launched by cowards,  
 steered by men behind their time?  
 Turn those tracks toward Past or Future,  
 that make Plymouth Rock sublime?  
 They were men of present valor, stalwart  
 old iconoclasts,

Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all vir-  
 tue was the Past's;  
 But we make their truth our falsehood,  
 thinking that hath made us free,  
 Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while  
 our tender spirits flee  
 The rude grasp of that great Impulse which  
 drove them across the sea. 80

They have rights who dare maintain them;  
 we are traitors to our sires,  
 Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's  
 new-lit altar-fires;  
 Shall we make their creed our jailer?  
 Shall we, in our haste to slay,  
 From the tombs of the old prophets steal  
 the funeral lamps away  
 To light up the martyr-fagots round the  
 prophets of to-day?

New occasions teach new duties; Time  
 makes ancient good uncouth;  
 They must upward still, and onward, who  
 would keep abreast of Truth;  
 Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we  
 ourselves must Pilgrims be,  
 Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly  
 through the desperate winter sea,  
 Nor attempt the Future's portal with the  
 Past's blood-rusted key. 90

December, 1844.

1845.

### A CONTRAST

THY love thou sentest oft to me,  
 And still as oft I thrust it back;  
 Thy messengers I could not see  
 In those who everything did lack,  
 The poor, the outcast and the black.

Pride held his hand before mine eyes,  
 The world with flattery stuffed mine  
 ears;  
 I looked to see a monarch's guise,  
 Nor dreamed thy love would knock for  
 years,  
 Poor, naked, fettered, full of tears.

Yet, when I sent my love to thee,  
 Thou with a smile didst take it in,  
 And entertain'dst it royally,  
 Though grimed with earth, with hunger  
 thin,  
 And leprous with the taint of sin.



Now every day thy love I meet,  
 As o'er the earth it wanders wide,  
 With weary step and bleeding feet,  
 Still knocking at the heart of pride  
 And offering grace, though still denied.  
 1845.

### AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE <sup>1</sup>

WHAT visionary tints the year puts on,  
 When falling leaves falter through motionless air  
 Or humbly cling and shiver to be gone!  
 How shimmer the low flats and pastures bare,  
 As with her nectar Hebe Autumn fills  
 The bowl between me and those distant hills,  
 And smiles and shakes abroad her misty,  
 tremulous hair!

No more the landscape holds its wealth apart,  
 Making me poorer in my poverty,  
 But mingles with my senses and my heart;  
 My own projected spirit seems to me  
 In her own reverie the world to steep;  
 'T is she that waves to sympathetic sleep,  
 Moving, as she is moved, each field and hill  
 and tree.

How fuse and mix, with what unfelt degrees,  
 Clasped by the faint horizon's languid arms,  
 Each into each, the hazy distances!  
 The softened season all the landscape charms;  
 Those hills, my native village that embay,  
 In waves of dreamier purple roll away,  
 And floating in mirage seem all the glimmering farms.

Far distant sounds the hidden chickadee  
 Close at my side; far distant sound the leaves;

<sup>1</sup> The reader familiar with Lowell's life will readily recognize the local references which occur in this poem. To others it may be worth while to point out that the village smithy is the same as that commemorated by Longfellow, that Allston lived in the section of Cambridge known as Cambridgeport, that some of the old willows at the causey's end still stand, and that the group is the one which gave the name to *Under the Willows*. (Cambridge Edition of Lowell's Poetical Works.)

The fields seem fields of dream, where  
 Memory  
 Wanders like gleanings Ruth; and as the sheaves  
 Of wheat and barley wavered in the eye  
 Of Boaz as the maiden's glow went by,  
 So tremble and seem remote all things the sense receives.

The cock's shrill trump that tells of scattered corn,  
 Passed breezily on by all his flapping mates,  
 Faint and more faint, from barn to barn is borne,  
 Southward, perhaps to far Magellan's Straits;  
 Dimly I catch the throb of distant flails;  
 Silently overhead the hen-hawk sails,  
 With watchful, measuring eye, and for his quarry waits.

The sobered robin, hunger-silent now,  
 Seeks cedar-berries blue, his autumn cheer;  
 The chipmunk, on the shingly shagbark's bough  
 Now saws, now lists with downward eye and ear,  
 Then drops his nut, and, cheeping, with a bound  
 Whisks to his winding fastness underground;  
 The clouds like swans drift down the streaming atmosphere.

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar shadows  
 Drowse on the crisp, gray moss; the ploughman's call  
 Creeps faint as smoke from black, fresh-furrowed meadows;  
 The single crow a single caw lets fall;  
 And all around me every bush and tree  
 Says Autumn's here, and Winter soon will be,  
 Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence over all.

The birch, most shy and ladylike of trees,  
 Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,  
 And hints at her foregone gentilities  
 With some saved relics of her wealth of leaves;  
 The swamp-oak, with his royal purple on,

Glares red as blood across the sinking  
sun,  
As one who prouder to a falling fortune  
cleaves.

He looks a sachem, in red blanket wrapt,  
Who, 'mid some council of the sad-garbed  
whites,  
Erect and stern, in his own memories  
lapt,  
With distant eye broods over other  
sights,  
Sees the hushed wood the city's flare re-  
place,  
The wounded turf heal o'er the railway's  
trace,  
And roams the savage Past of his un-  
dwindled rights.

The red-oak, softer-grained, yields all for  
lost,  
And, with his crumpled foliage stiff and  
dry,  
After the first betrayal of the frost,  
Rebuffs the kiss of the relenting sky;  
The chestnuts, lavish of their long-hid  
gold,  
To the faint Summer, beggared now and  
old,  
Pour back the sunshine hoarded 'neath her  
favoring eye.

The ash her purple drops forgivingly  
And sadly, breaking not the general hush;  
The maple-swamps glow like a sunset  
sea,  
Each leaf a ripple with its separate flush;  
All round the wood's edge creeps the  
skirting blaze  
Of bushes low, as when, on cloudy days,  
Ere the rain fall, the cautious farmer burns  
his brush.

O'er yon low wall, which guards one un-  
kempt zone,  
Where vines and weeds and scrub-oaks  
intertwine  
Safe from the plough, whose rough, dis-  
cordant stone  
Is massed to one soft gray by lichens fine,  
The tangled blackberry, crossed and re-  
crossed, weaves  
A prickly network of ensanguined leaves;  
Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-  
alders shine.

Pillaring with flame this crumbling bound-  
ary,  
Whose loose blocks topple 'neath the plough-  
boy's foot,  
Who, with each sense shut fast except  
the eye,  
Creeps close and scares the jay he hoped to  
shoot,  
The woodbine up the elm's straight stem  
aspires,  
Coiling it, harmless, with autumnal  
fires;  
In the ivy's paler blaze the martyr oak  
stands mute.

Below, the Charles, a stripe of nether  
sky,  
Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,  
Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps  
bellying by,  
Now flickering golden through a woodland  
screen,  
Then spreading out, at his next turn be-  
yond,  
A silver circle like an inland pond —  
Slips seaward silently through marshes  
purple and green.

Dear marshes! vain to him the gift of  
sight  
Who cannot in their various incomes  
share,  
From every season drawn, of shade and  
light,  
Who sees in them but levels brown and  
bare;  
Each change of storm or sunshine scatters  
free  
On them its largess of variety,  
For Nature with cheap means still works  
her wonders rare.

In Spring they lie one broad expanse of  
green,  
O'er which the light winds run with glim-  
mering feet:  
Here, yellower stripes track out the creek  
unseen,  
There, darker growths o'er hidden ditches  
meet;  
And purpler stains show where the blos-  
soms crowd,  
As if the silent shadow of a cloud  
Hung there becalmed, with the next breath  
to fleet.

All round, upon the river's slippery edge,  
 Witching to deeper calm the drowsy tide,  
 Whispers and leans the breeze-entangling  
 sedge;  
 Through emerald glooms the lingering  
 waters slide,  
 Or, sometimes wavering, throw back the  
 sun,  
 And the stiff banks in eddies melt and run  
 Of dimpling light, and with the current  
 seem to glide.

In Summer 't is a blithesome sight to  
 see,  
 As, step by step, with measured swing, they<sup>120</sup>  
 pass,  
 The wide-ranked mowers wading to the  
 knee,  
 Their sharp scythes panting through the  
 wiry grass;  
 Then, stretched beneath a rick's shade in  
 a ring,  
 Their nooning take, while one begins to  
 sing  
 A stave that droops and dies 'neath the  
 close sky of brass.

Meanwhile that devil-may-care, the bobo-  
 link,  
 Remembering duty, in mid-quaver stops  
 Just ere he sweeps o'er rapture's tremu-  
 lous brink,  
 And 'twixt the winrows most demurely  
 drops,  
 A decorous bird of business, who provides<sup>130</sup>  
 For his brown mate and fledglings six  
 besides,  
 And looks from right to left, a farmer 'mid  
 his crops.

Another change subdues them in the Fall,  
 But saddens not; they still show merrier  
 tints,  
 Though sober russet seems to cover all;  
 When the first sunshine through their dew-  
 drops glints,  
 Look how the yellow clearness, streamed  
 across,  
 Redeems with rarer hues the season's  
 loss,  
 As Dawn's feet there had touched and left  
 their rosy prints.<sup>140</sup>

Or come when sunset gives its freshened  
 zest,

Lean o'er the bridge and let the ruddy  
 thrill,  
 While the shorn sun swells down the hazy  
 west,  
 Glow opposite; — the marshes drink their  
 fill  
 And swoon with purple veins, then slowly  
 fade  
 Through pink to brown, as eastward  
 moves the shade,  
 Lengthening with stealthy creep, of Si-  
 mond's darkening hill.

Later, and yet ere Winter wholly shuts,  
 Ere through the first dry snow the runner  
 grates,  
 And the loath cart-wheel screams in  
 slippery ruts,<sup>150</sup>  
 While firmer ice the eager boy awaits,  
 Trying each buckle and strap beside the  
 fire,  
 And until bedtime plays with his desire,  
 Twenty times putting on and off his new-  
 bought skates; —

Then, every morn, the river's banks shine  
 bright  
 With smooth plate-armor, treacherous and  
 frail,  
 By the frost's clinking hammers forged  
 at night,  
 'Gainst which the lances of the sun prevail,  
 Giving a pretty emblem of the day  
 When guiltier arms in light shall melt  
 away,<sup>160</sup>  
 And states shall move free-limbed, loosed  
 from war's cramping mail.

And now those waterfalls the ebbing  
 river  
 Twice every day creates on either side  
 Tinkle, as through their fresh-sparred  
 grots they shiver  
 In grass-arched channels to the sun denied;  
 High flaps in sparkling blue the far-  
 heard crow,  
 The silvered flats gleam frostily below,  
 Suddenly drops the gull and breaks the  
 glassy tide.

But crowned in turn by vying seasons  
 three,  
 Their winter halo hath a fuller ring;<sup>170</sup>  
 This glory seems to rest immovably, —

The others were too fleet and vanishing;  
 When the hid tide is at its highest flow,  
 O'er marsh and stream one breathless  
 trance of snow  
 With brooding fulness awes and hushes  
 everything.

The sunshine seems blown off by the bleak  
 wind,  
 As pale as formal candles lit by day;  
 Gropes to the sea the river dumb and  
 blind;  
 The brown ricks, snow-thatched by the  
 storm in play,  
 Show pearly breakers combing o'er their  
 lee, 180  
 White crests as of some just enchanted  
 sea,  
 Checked in their maddest leap and hanging  
 poised midway.

But when the eastern blow, with rain  
 aslant,  
 From mid-sea's prairies green and rolling  
 plains  
 Drives in his wallowing herds of billows  
 gaunt,  
 And the roused Charles remembers in his  
 veins  
 Old Ocean's blood and snaps his gyves of  
 frost,  
 That tyrannous silence on the shores is  
 tost  
 In dreary wreck, and crumbling desolation  
 reigns.

Edgewise or flat, in Druid-like device, 190  
 With leaden pools between or gullies  
 bare,  
 The blocks lie strewn, a bleak Stonehenge  
 of ice;  
 No life, no sound, to break the grim de-  
 spair,  
 Save sullen plunge, as through the sedges  
 stiff  
 Down crackles riverward some thaw-  
 sapped cliff,  
 Or when the close-wedged fields of ice  
 crunch here and there.

But let me turn from fancy-pictured  
 scenes  
 To that whose pastoral calm before me lies:  
 Here nothing harsh or rugged inter-  
 venes;

The early evening with her misty dyes 200  
 Smooths off the ravelled edges of the  
 nigh,  
 Relieves the distant with her cooler sky,  
 And tones the landscape down, and soothes  
 the wearied eyes.

There gleams my native village, dear to  
 me,  
 Though higher change's waves each day  
 are seen,  
 Whelming fields famed in boyhood's his-  
 tory,  
 Sanding with houses the diminished  
 green;  
 There, in red brick, which softening time  
 defies,  
 Stand square and stiff the Muses' fac-  
 tories;—  
 How with my life knit up is every well-  
 known scene! 210

Flow on, dear river! not alone you flow  
 To outward sight, and through your marshes  
 wind;  
 Fed from the mystic springs of long-  
 ago,  
 Your twin flows silent through my world  
 of mind: <sup>1</sup>  
 Grow dim, dear marshes, in the evening's  
 gray!  
 Before my inner sight ye stretch away,  
 And will forever, though these fleshly eyes  
 grow blind.

Beyond the hillock's house-bespotted  
 swell,  
 Where Gothic chapels house the horse and  
 chaise,  
 Where quiet cits in Grecian temples  
 dwell, 220  
 Where Coptic tombs resound with prayer  
 and praise,  
 Where dust and mud the equal year di-  
 vide,  
 There gentle Allston lived, and wrought,  
 and died,  
 Transfiguring street and shop with his illu-  
 mined gaze.

*Virgilium vidi tantum*, — I have seen  
 But as a boy, who looks alike on all,  
 That misty hair, that fine Undine-like  
 mien,

<sup>1</sup> Compare Emerson's 'Two Rivers,' p. 87.

Tremulous as down to feeling's faintest  
call; —

Ah, dear old homestead ! count it to thy  
fame  
That thither many times the Painter  
came; —  
One elm yet bears his name, a feathery tree  
and tall. 230

Swiftly the present fades in memory's  
glow, —  
Our only sure possession is the past;  
The village blacksmith died a month ago,  
And dim to me the forge's roaring blast;  
Soon fire-new medisevals we shall see  
Oust the black smithy from its chestnut-  
tree,  
And that hewn down, perhaps, the beehive  
green and vast. <sup>1</sup>

How many times, prouder than king on  
throne,  
Loosed from the village school-dame's A's  
and B's, 240  
Panting have I the creaky bellows blown,  
And watched the pent volcano's red in-  
crease,  
Then paused to see the ponderous sledge,  
brought down  
By that hard arm voluminous and brown,  
From the white iron swarm its golden van-  
ishing bees.

Dear native town ! whose choking elms  
each year  
With eddying dust before their time turn  
gray,  
Pining for rain, — to me thy dust is dear;  
It glorifies the eve of summer day,  
And when the westering sun half sunken  
burns, 250  
The mote-thick air to deepest orange  
turns,  
The westward horseman rides through  
clouds of gold away,

So palpable, I've seen those unshorn few,  
The six old willows at the causey's end  
(Such trees Paul Potter never dreamed  
nor drew),  
Through this dry mist their checkering  
shadows send,

<sup>1</sup> The tree was cut down by the city authorities in 1876. See the note on Longfellow's 'Village Blacksmith,' p. 108.

Striped, here and there, with many a  
long-drawn thread,  
Where streamed through leafy chinks the  
trembling red,  
Past which, in one bright trail, the hang-  
bird's flashes blend.

Yes, dearer far thy dust than all that  
e'er, 260  
Beneath the awarded crown of victory,  
Gilded the blown Olympic charioteer;  
Though lightly prized the ribboned parch-  
ments three,  
Yet *collegisse juvat*, I am glad  
That here what colleging was mine I  
had, —  
It linked another tie, dear native town, with  
thee !

Nearer art thou than simply native earth,  
My dust with thine concedes a deeper tie;  
A closer claim thy soil may well put  
forth,  
Something of kindred more than sympa-  
thy; 270  
For in thy bounds I reverently laid away  
That blinding anguish of forsaken clay,  
That title I seemed to have in earth and  
sea and sky,

That portion of my life more choice to  
me  
(Though brief, yet in itself so round and  
whole)  
Than all the imperfect residue can be; —  
The Artist saw his statue of the soul  
Was perfect; so, with one regretful  
stroke,  
The earthen model into fragments broke,  
And without her the impoverished seasons  
roll. 280

1847.

1847.

### HEBE

I SAW the twinkle of white feet,  
I saw the flash of robes descending;  
Before her ran an influence fleet,  
That bowed my heart like barley bending.

As, in bare fields, the searching bees  
Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,  
It led me on, by sweet degrees  
Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim  
Fates;  
With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me;  
The long-sought Secret's golden gates  
On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp  
Thrilling with godhood; like a lover  
I sprang the proffered life to clasp; —  
The beaker fell; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up;  
What boots it patch the goblet's splinters?  
Can Summer fill the icy cup,  
Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's?

O spendthrift haste! await the Gods;  
The nectar crowns the lips of Patience;  
Haste scatters on unthankful sods  
The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,  
And shuns the hands would seize upon  
her;  
Follow thy life, and she will sue  
To pour for thee the cup of honor.

1847.

THE CHANGELING<sup>1</sup>

I HAD a little daughter,  
And she was given to me  
To lead me gently backward  
To the Heavenly Father's knee,  
That I, by the force of nature,  
Might in some dim wise divine  
The depth of his infinite patience  
To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,  
But to me she was wholly fair,<sup>10</sup>  
And the light of the heaven she came  
from  
Still lingered and gleamed in her hair;  
For it was as wavy and golden,  
And as many changes took,  
As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples  
On the yellow bed of a brook.

To what can I liken her smiling  
Upon me, her kneeling lover,

<sup>1</sup> Lowell's first child, Blanche, was born December 31, 1845, and died March 19, 1847. The sorrow of her loss was softened by the birth of a second daughter in the autumn of 1847. See 'The First Snow-Fall.'

How it leaped from her lips to her eye-  
lids,  
And dimpled her wholly over,<sup>20</sup>  
Till her outstretched hands smiled also,  
And I almost seemed to see  
The very heart of her mother  
Sending sun through her veins to me!

She had been with us scarce a twelve-  
month,  
And it hardly seemed a day,  
When a troop of wandering angels  
Stole my little daughter away;  
Or perhaps those heavenly Zingari  
But loosed the hampering strings,<sup>30</sup>  
And when they had opened her cage-  
door,  
My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,  
A little angel child,  
That seems like her bud in full blossom,  
And smiles as she never smiled:  
When I wake in the morning, I see it  
Where she always used to lie,  
And I feel as weak as a violet  
Alone 'neath the awful sky.<sup>40</sup>

As weak, yet as trustful also;  
For the whole year long I see  
All the wonders of faithful Nature  
Still worked for the love of me;  
Winds wander, and dew drops drip earth-  
ward,  
Rain falls, suns rise and set,  
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper  
A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,  
I cannot sing it to rest,<sup>50</sup>  
I cannot lift it up fatherly  
And bliss it upon my breast:  
Yet it lies in my little one's cradle  
And sits in my little one's chair,  
And the light of the heaven she's gone to  
Transfigures its golden hair.

1847.

1847

## SHE CAME AND WENT

As a twig trembles, which a bird  
Lights on to sing, then leaves unbent,  
So is my memory thrilled and stirred; —  
I only know she came and went.

As clasps some lake, by gusts unriven,  
The blue dome's measureless content,  
So my soul held that moment's heaven; —  
I only know she came and went.

As, at one bound, our swift spring heaps  
The orchards full of bloom and scent,  
So clove her May my wintry sleeps; —  
I only know she came and went.

An angel stood and met my gaze,  
Through the low doorway of my tent;  
The tent is struck, the vision stays; —  
I only know she came and went.

Oh, when the room grows slowly dim,  
And life's last oil is nearly spent,  
One gush of light these eyes will brim,  
Only to think she came and went.

1847 ?

(1849.)

### 'I THOUGHT OUR LOVE AT FULL, BUT I DID ERR'

I THOUGHT our love at full, but I did err;  
Joy's wreath drooped o'er mine eyes; I  
could not see

That sorrow in our happy world must be  
Love's deepest spokesman and interpreter:  
But, as a mother feels her child first stir  
Under her heart, so felt I instantly  
Deep in my soul another bond to thee  
Thrill with that life we saw depart from her:  
O mother of our angel child! twice dear!  
Death knits as well as parts, and still, I wis,  
Her tender radiance shall infold us here,  
Even as the light, borne up by inward bliss,  
Threads the void glooms of space without  
a fear,

To print on farthest stars her pitying kiss.

(1849.)

## THE BIGLOW PAPERS<sup>1</sup>

### FIRST SERIES

#### No. I

#### A LETTER<sup>2</sup>

FROM MR. EZEKIEL BIGLOW OF JAALAM  
TO THE HON. JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM,  
EDITOR OF THE BOSTON COURIER, IN-  
CLOSING A POEM OF HIS SON, MR.  
HOSEA BIGLOW

JAYLEM, June 1846.

MISTER EDDYTER, — Our Hosea wuz  
down to Boston last week, and he see a

<sup>1</sup> Cumberland in his *Memoirs* tells us that when, in the midst of Admiral Rodney's great sea-fight, Sir Charles Douglas said to him, 'Behold, Sir George, the Greeks and Trojans contending for the body of Patroclus!' the Admiral answered, peevishly, 'Damn the Greeks and damn the Trojans! I have other things to think of.' After the battle was won, Rodney thus to Sir Charles, 'Now, my dear friend, I am at the service of your Greeks and Trojans, and the whole of Homer's *Iliad*, or as much of it as you please!' I had some such feeling of the impertinence of our pseudo-classicality when I chose our homely dialect to work in. Should we be nothing, because somebody had contrived to be something (and that perhaps in a provincial dialect) ages ago? and be nothing by our very attempt to be that something, which they had already been, and which therefore nobody could be again without being a bore? Is there no way left, then, I thought, of being natural, of being *natf*, which means nothing more than native, of belonging to the age and country in which you are born? The Yankee, at least, is a new phenomenon; let us try to be *that*. . . . To me the dialect was native, was spoken all about me when a boy, at a time when an Irish day-laborer was as rare as an Ameri-

cruetin Sarjunt a struttin round as popler  
as a hen with 1 chicking, with 2 fellers a

can one now. Since then I have made a study of it so far as opportunity allowed. But when I write in it, it is as in a mother tongue, and I am carried back far beyond any studies of it to long-ago nooning in my father's hay-fields, and to the talk of Sam and Job over their jug of *blackstrap* under the shadow of the ash-tree which still dapples the grass whence they have been gone so long. (LOWELL, in the 'Introduction' to the *Biglow Papers*, 1866.)

I only know that I believed our war with Mexico (though we had as just ground for it as a strong nation ever has against a weak one) to be essentially a war of false pretences, and that it would result in widening the boundaries and so prolonging the life of slavery. . . . Against these and many other things I thought all honest men should protest. I was born and bred in the country, and the dialect was homely to me. I tried my first *Biglow Paper* in a newspaper, and found that it had a great run. So I wrote the others from that time during the year which followed, always very rapidly, and sometimes (as with 'What Mr. Robinson thinks') at one sitting.

When I came to collect them and publish them in a volume, I conceived my parson-editor with his pedantry and verbosity, his amiable vanity and superiority to the verses he was editing, as a fitting artistic background and soil. It gave me the chance, too, of glancing obliquely at many things which were beyond the horizon of my other characters. (LOWELL, in a letter on the first series of the *Biglow Papers*, September 13, 1859, to Thomas Hughes, who was planning an English reprint of them. *Lowell's Letters*, vol. i, pp. 296, 297. Quoted by the kind permission of Messrs. Harper & Bros.) On the political effect of the *Biglow Papers*, see *Greenleaf's Lowell*, pp. 84-86.

<sup>2</sup> The act of May 13, 1846, authorized President Polk to employ the militia, and call out 50,000 volunteers, if



drummin and ffin arter him like all nater. the sarjunt he thout Hosea hed n't gut his i teeth cut cos he looked a kindo's though he 'd jest com down, so he cal'lated to hook him in, but Hosy wood n't take none o' his sarse for all he hed much as 20 Rooster's tales stuck onto his hat and eenamost enuf brass a bobbin up and down on his shoulders and figureed onto his coat and trousis, let alone wut nater hed sot in his featers, to make a 6 pounder out on.

wal, Hosea he com home considerabal riled, and arter I'd gone to bed I heern Him a thrashin round like a short-tailed Bull in fti-time. The old Woman ses she to me ses she, Zekle, ses she, our Hosee's gut the chollery or suthin anuther ses she, don't you Bee skeered, ses I, he's oney amakin pottery<sup>1</sup> ses i, he's ollers on hand at that ere busynes like Da & martin, and shure enuf, cum mornin, Hosy he cum down stares full chizzle, hare on eend and cote tales flyin, and sot rite of to go reed his vases to Parson Wilbur bein he haint aney grate shows o' book larnin himself, bimeby he cum back and sed the parson wuz dreffle tickled with 'em as i hoop you will Be, and said they wuz True grit.

Hosea ses taint hardly fair to call 'em hisn now, cos the parson kind o' slicked off sum o' the last vases, but he told Hosee he did n't want to put his ore in to tetch to the Rest on 'em, bein they wuz verry well As thay wuz, and then Hosy ses he sed suthin a nuther about Simplex Mundishes or sum sech feller, but I guess Hosea kind o' did n't hear him, for I never hearn o' nobody o' that name in this villadge, and I've lived here man and boy 76 year cum next tater diggin, and thair aint no wheres a kitting spryer 'n I be.

necessary. He immediately called for the full number of volunteers, asking Massachusetts for 777 men. On May 26 Governor Briggs issued a proclamation for the enrolment of the regiment. As the President's call was merely a request and not an order, many Whigs and the Abolitionists were for refusing it. *The Liberator* for June 5 severely censured the governor for complying, and accused him of not carrying out the resolutions of the last Whig Convention, which had pledged the party 'to present as firm a front of opposition to the institution as was consistent with their allegiance to the Constitution.' (Note by Mr. Frank Beverly Williams, in the *Riverside* and *Cambridge Editions* of Lowell's *Poetical Works*).

<sup>1</sup> *Aut insani, aut versus facti.* — H. W. (The comments signed H. W. are made by the Rev. Homer Wilbur, A. M., pastor of the First Church in Jaalam, who edits the poems of his young parishioner Hosea Biglow.

If you print 'em I wish you 'd jest let folks know who hosy's father is, cos my ant Keziah used to say it's nater to be curus ses she, she aint livin though and he's a likely kind o' lad.

EZEKIEL BIGLOW.

THRASH away, you 'll hev to rattle  
On them kittle-drums o' yourn, —  
'T aint a knowin' kind o' cattle  
Thet is ketchd with mouldy corn;  
Put in stiff, you fifer feller,  
Let folks see how spry you be, —  
Guess you 'll toot till you are yellor  
'Fore you git ahold o' me!

Thet air flag's a leetle rotten,  
Hope it aint your Sunday's best; — 10  
Fact! it takes a sight o' cotton  
To stuff out a soger's chest:  
Sence we farmers hev to pay fer 't,  
Ef you must wear humps like these,  
S'posin' you should try salt hay fer 't,  
It would du ez slick ez grease.

'T would n't suit them Southun fellers,  
They're a dreffle graspin' set,  
We must ollers blow the bellers  
Wen they want their irons het; 20  
May be it's all right ez preachin',  
But my narves it kind o' grates,  
Wen I see the overreachin'  
O' them nigger-drivin' States.

Them thet rule us, them slave-traders,  
Haint they cut a thunderin' swarth  
(Helped by Yankee renegaders),  
Thru the vartu o' the North!  
We begin to think it's nater  
To take sarse an' not be riled; — 30  
Who'd expect to see a tater  
All on eend at bein' biled?

Ez fer war, I call it murder, —  
There you hev it plain an' flat;  
I don't want to go no funder  
Than my Testymnt fer that;  
God hez sed so plump an' fairly,  
It's ez long ez it is broad,  
An' you've gut to git up airly  
Ef you want to take in God. 40

'T aint your eppyletts an' feathers  
Make the thing a grain more right;

'T aint afollerin' your bell-wethers  
Will excuse ye in His sight;  
Ef you take a sword an' dror it,  
An' go stick a feller thru,  
Guv'ment aint to answer for it,  
God 'll send the bill to you.

Wut 's the use o' meetin'-goin'  
Every Sabbath, wet or dry,  
Ef it 's right to go amowin'  
Feller-men like oats an' rye?  
I dunno but wut it 's pooty  
Trainin' round in bobtail coats, —  
But it 's curus Christian dooty  
This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.

They may talk o' Freedom's airy  
Tell they 're pupple in the face, —  
It 's a grand gret cemetary  
Fer the barthrights of our race;  
They jest want this Californy  
So 's to lug new slave-States in  
To abuse ye, an' to scorn ye,  
An' to plunder ye like sin.

Aint it cute to see a Yankee  
Take sech everlastin' pains,  
All to get the Devil's thankee  
Helpin' on 'em weld their chains?  
Wy, it 's jest ez clear ez figgers,  
Clear ez one an' one make two,  
Chaps thet make black slaves o' nig-  
gers  
Want to make wite slaves o' you.

Tell ye jest the eend I've come to  
Arter cipherin' plaguy smart,  
An' it makes a handy sum, tu,  
Any gump could larn by heart;  
Laborin' man an' laborin' woman  
Hev one glory an' one shame.  
Ev'y thin' thet 's done inhuman  
Injers all on 'em the same.

'T aint by turnin' out to hack folks  
You 're agoin' to git your right,  
Nor by lookin' down on black folks  
Coz you 're put upon by wite;  
Slavery aint o' nary color,  
'T aint the hide thet makes it wus,  
All it keers fer in a feller  
'S jest to make him fill its pus.

Want to tackle *me* in, du ye?  
I expect you 'll hev to wait;

Wen cold lead puts daylight thru ye  
You 'll begin to kal'late;  
S'pose the crows wun't fall to pickin'  
All the carkiss from your bones,  
Coz you helped to give a lickin'  
To them poor half-Spanish drones?

Jest go home an' ask our Nancy  
Wether I 'd be sech a goose  
Ez to jine ye, — guess you 'd fancy  
The etarnal bung wuz loose!  
She wants me fer home consumption,  
Let alone the hay 's to mow, —  
Ef you 're arter folks o' gumption,  
You 've a darned long row to hoe.

Take them editors thet 's crowin'  
Like a cockerel three months old, —  
Don't ketch any on 'em goin',  
Though they be so blasted bold;  
Aint they a prime lot o' fellers?  
'Fore they think on 't guess they 'll  
sprout  
(Like a peach thet 's got the yellars),  
With the meanness bustin' out.

Wal, go 'long to help 'em stealin'  
Bigger pens to cram with slaves,  
Help the men thet 's ollers dealin'  
Insults on your fathers' graves;  
Help the strong to grind the feeble,  
Help the many agin the few,  
Help the men thet call your people  
Witewashed slaves an' peddlin' crew!

Massachusetts, God forgive her,  
She 's akneelin' with the rest,<sup>1</sup>  
She, thet ough' to ha' clung ferever  
In her grand old eagle-nest;  
She thet ough' to stand so fearless  
W'ile the wracks are round her hurled,  
Holdin' up a beacon peerless  
To the oppressed of all the world!

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to the governor's call for troops as well as to the vote on the War Bill. On May 11, 1846, the President sent to the House of Representatives his well-known message declaring the existence of war brought on 'by the act of Mexico,' and asking for a supply of \$10,000,000. Of the seven members from Massachusetts, all Whigs, two, Robert C. Winthrop, of Boston, and Amos Abbott, of Andover, voted for the bill. The Whigs throughout the country, remembering the fate of the party which had opposed the last war with England, sanctioned the measure as necessary for the preservation of the army, then in peril by the unauthorized acts of the President. (F. B. Williams, in *Riverside and Cambridge Editions*.)

Ha'n't they sold your colored seamen?  
 Ha'n't they made your env'ys w'iz?<sup>1</sup>  
 Wut 'll make ye act like freemen? 131  
 Wut 'll git your dander riz?  
 Come, I'll tell ye wut I'm thinkin'  
 Is our dooty in this fix,  
 They'd ha' done 't ez quick ez winkin'  
 In the days o' seventy-six.

Clang the bells in every steeple,  
 Call all true men to disown  
 The tradoccers of our people,  
 The enslavers o' their own; 140  
 Let our dear old Bay State proudly  
 Put the trumpet to her mouth,  
 Let her ring this messidge loudly  
 In the ears of all the South:—

'I'll return ye good fer evil  
 Much ez we frail mortils can,  
 But I wun't go help the Devil  
 Makin' man the cus o' man;  
 Call me coward, call me traiter,  
 Jest ez suits your mean idees, — 150  
 Here I stand a tyrant-hater,  
 An' the friend o' God an' Peace!'

Ef I'd my way I hed ruther  
 We should go to work an' part,<sup>2</sup>  
 They take one way, we take t' other,  
 Guess it would n't break my heart;

<sup>1</sup> South Carolina, Louisiana, and several other Southern States at an early date passed acts to prevent free persons of color from entering their jurisdictions. These acts bore with particular severity upon colored seamen, who were imprisoned, fined, or whipped, and often sold into slavery. On the petition of the Massachusetts Legislature, Governor Briggs, in 1844, appointed Mr. Samuel Hoar agent to Charleston, and Mr. George Hubbard to New Orleans, to act on behalf of oppressed colored citizens of the Bay State. Mr. Hoar was expelled from South Carolina by order of the Legislature of that State, and Mr. Hubbard was forced by threats of violence to leave Louisiana. The obnoxious acts remained in force until after the Civil War. (F. B. Williams, in *Riverside and Cambridge Editions*.)

<sup>2</sup> Propositions to secede were not uncommon in New England at this time. The rights of the States had been strongly asserted on the acquisition of Louisiana in 1803, and on the admission of the State of that name in 1812. Among the resolutions of the Massachusetts Legislature adopted in 1845, relative to the proposed annexation of Texas, was one declaring that 'such an act of admission would have no binding force whatever on the people of Massachusetts.'

John Quincy Adams, in a discourse before the New York Historical Society, in 1839, claimed a right for the States 'to part in friendship with each other . . . when the fraternal spirit shall give way,' etc. The Garrisonian wing of the Abolitionists notoriously advocated secession. There were several other instances of an expression of this sentiment, but for the most part they were not evoked by opposition to slavery. (F. B. Williams in *Riverside and Cambridge Editions*.)

Man hed ough' to put asunder  
 Them thet God has noways jined;  
 An' I should n't gretly wonder  
 Ef there 's thousands o' my mind.  
 June 17, 1846.

[The first recruiting sergeant on record I conceive to have been that individual who is mentioned in the Book of Job as *going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it*. Bishop Latimer will have him to have been a bishop, but to me that other calling would appear more congenial. The sect of Cainites is not yet extinct, who esteemed the first-born of Adam to be the most worthy, not only because of that privilege of primogeniture, but inasmuch as he was able to overcome and slay his younger brother. That was a wise saying of the famous Marquis Pescara to the Papal Legate, that it *was impossible for men to serve Mars and Christ at the same time*. Yet in time past the profession of arms was judged to be *κατ' ἐξοχήν* that of a gentleman, nor does this opinion want for strenuous upholders even in our day. Must we suppose, then, that the profession of Christianity was only intended for losels, or, at best, to afford an opening for plebeian ambition? Or shall we hold with that nicely metaphysical Pomeranian, Captain Vratz, who was Count Königsmark's chief instrument in the murder of Mr. Thynne, that the Scheme of Salvation has been arranged with an especial eye to the necessities of the upper classes, and that 'God would consider a gentleman and deal with him suitably to the condition and profession he had placed him in'? It may be said of us all, *Exemplo plus quam ratione vivimus*. — H. W.]

### NO. III

#### WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

GUVERNER B. is a sensible man;<sup>3</sup>

He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;

<sup>3</sup> George Nixon Briggs was the Whig governor of Massachusetts from 1844 to 1851. The campaign referred to here is that of 1847. Governor Briggs was renominated by acclamation and supported by his party with great enthusiasm. His opponent was Caleb Cushing, then in Mexico, and raised by President Polk to the rank of Brigadier-General. Cushing was defeated by a majority of 14,060. (F. B. Williams.)

He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,  
 An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;  
     But John P.<sup>1</sup>  
     Robinson he  
 Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

My ! aint it terrible ? Wut shall we du ?  
 We can't never choose him o' course, —  
     thet's flat;  
 Guess we shall hev to come round (don't  
     you ?)  
     An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all  
     that;  
     Fer John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

Gineral C. is a drefle smart man :<sup>2</sup>  
 He's ben on all sides thet give places or  
     pelf;  
 But consistency still wuz a part of his  
     plan, —  
 He's ben true to *one* party, — an' thet is  
     himself; —  
     So John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

Gineral C. he goes in fer the war;  
 He don't vally princerple more 'n an old  
     cud;  
 Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,  
 But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an'  
     blood ?  
     So John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez he shall vote fer Gineral C.

We were gittin' on nicely up here to our  
     village,  
 With good old idees o' wut's right an'  
     wut aint,  
 We kind o' thought Christ went agin war  
     an' pillage,

<sup>1</sup> John Paul Robinson (1799-1864) was a resident of Lowell, a lawyer of considerable ability, and a thorough classical scholar. He represented Lowell in the State Legislature in 1829, 1830, 1831, 1833, and 1842, and was Senator from Middlesex in 1836. Late in the gubernatorial contest of 1847 it was rumored that Robinson, heretofore a zealous Whig, and a delegate to the recent Springfield Convention, had gone over to the Democratic or, as it was then styled, the 'Loco' camp. The editor of the *Boston Palladium* wrote to him to learn the truth, and Robinson replied in an open letter avowing his intention to vote for Cushing. (F. B. Williams.)

<sup>2</sup> General Caleb Cushing.

An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark  
     of a saint;  
     But John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded  
     idee.

The side of our country must ollers be took,  
 An' President Polk, you know, *he* is our  
     country.  
 An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a  
     book  
     Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per*  
     *contry*;  
     An' John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts  
     lies;  
 Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest  
     *fee, faw, fum*;  
 An' thet all this big talk of our destinies  
     Is half on it ign'ance, an' t'other half  
     rum;  
     But John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez it aint no sech thing; an', of course,  
     so must we.

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his  
     life  
     Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their  
     swaller-tail coats,  
 An' marched round in front of a drum an'  
     a fife,  
 To git some on 'em office, an' some on  
     'em votes;  
     But John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez they did n't know everythin' down  
     in Judee.

Wal, it's a marcy we've gut folks to tell us  
     The rights an' the wrongs o' these mat-  
     ters, I vow, —  
 God sends country lawyers, an' other wise  
     fellers,  
 To start the world's team wen it gits in  
     a slough;  
     Fer John P.  
     Robinson he  
 Sez the world 'll go right, ef he hollers  
     out Gee !

November 2, 1847.

[The attentive reader will doubtless have perceived in the foregoing poem an allusion to that pernicious sentiment, 'Our country, right or wrong.' It is an abuse of language to call a certain portion of land, much more, certain personages, elevated for the time being to high station, our country. I would not sever nor loosen a single one of those ties by which we are united to the spot of our birth, nor diminish by a tittle the respect due to the Magistrate. I love our own Bay State too well to do the one, and as for the other, I have myself for nigh forty years exercised, however unworthily, the function of Justice of the Peace, having been called thereto by the unsolicited kindness of that most excellent man and upright patriot, Caleb Strong. *Patriae fumus igne alieno luculentior* is best qualified with this, — *Ubi libertas, ibi patria*. We are inhabitants of two worlds, and owe a double, not a divided, allegiance. In virtue of our clay, this little ball of earth exacts a certain loyalty of us, while, in our capacity as spirits, we are admitted citizens of an invisible and holier fatherland. There is a patriotism of the soul whose claim absolves us from our other and terrene fealty. Our true country is that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, and the like. Our terrestrial organizations are but far-off approaches to so fair a model, and all they are verily traitors who resist not any attempt to divert them from this their original intendment. When, therefore, one would have us to fling up our caps and shout with the multitude, 'Our country, however bounded!' <sup>1</sup> he demands of us that we sacrifice the larger to the less, the higher to the lower, and that we yield to the imaginary claims of a few acres of soil our duty and privilege as liegemen of Truth. Our true country is bounded on the north and the south, on the east and the west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that invisible boundary-line by so much as a hair's-breadth, she ceases to be our mother,

and chooses rather to be looked upon *quasi noverca*. That is a hard choice when our earthly love of country calls upon us to tread one path and our duty points us to another. We must make as noble and becoming an election as did Penelope between Icarus and Ulysses. Veiling our faces, we must take silently the hand of Duty to follow her. . . . H. W.]

## No. VI

## THE PIOUS EDITOR'S CREED

I du believe in Freedom's cause,  
Ez fur away ez Payris is;<sup>2</sup>  
I love to see her stick her claws  
In them infarnal Phayrisees;  
It's wal enough agin a king  
To dror resolves an' triggers, —  
But libbaty's a kind o' thing  
Thet don't agree with niggers.

I du believe the people want  
A tax on teas an' coffees, 10  
Thet nothin' aint extravygunt, —  
Purvidin' I'm in office;  
Fer I hev loved my country sence  
My eye-teeth filled their sockets,  
An' Uncle Sam I reverence,  
Partic'larly his pockets.

I du believe in any plan  
O' levyin' the texes,  
Ez long ez, like a lumberman,  
I git jest wut I axes; 20  
I go free-trade thru thick an' thin,  
Because it kind o' rouses  
The folks to vote, — an' keeps us in  
Our quiet custom-houses.

I du believe it's wise an' good  
To sen' out furrin missions,  
Thet is, on sartin understood  
An' orthydox conditions; —  
I mean nine thousan' dolls. per ann.,  
'Nine thousan' more fer outfit, 30  
An' me to recommend a man  
The place 'ould jest about fit.

I du believe in special ways  
O' prayin' an' convartin';  
The bread comes back in many days,

<sup>2</sup> This was written just after the Revolution of 1848 in France, when the monarchy of Louis Philippe was overthrown.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. R. C. Winthrop, M. C., in a speech at Faneuil Hall, July 4, 1845, said in deprecation of secession: 'Our country — bounded by the St. John's and the Sabine, or however otherwise bounded or described, and be the measurements more or less — still our country — to be cherished in all our hearts, to be defended by all our hands.' The sentiment was at once taken up and used effectively by the 'Cotton' Whigs, those who inclined to favor the Mexican War. (F. B. Williams.)

An' buttered, tu, fer sartin;  
I mean in preyin' till one busts  
On wut the party chooses,  
An' in convartin' public trusts  
To very privit uses.

40

I du believe hard coin the stuff  
Fer 'lectioneers to spout on;  
The people 's ollers soft enough  
To make hard money out on;  
Dear Uncle Sam pervides fer his,  
An' gives a good-sized junk to all, —  
I don't care *how* hard money is,  
Ez long ez mine 's paid punctoal.

I du believe with all my soul  
In the gret Press's freedom,  
To pint the people to the goal  
An' in the traces lead 'em;  
Palsied the arm thet forges yokes  
At my fat contracts squintin',  
An' withered be the nose thet pokes  
Inter the gov'ment printin'!

50

I du believe thet I should give  
Wut 's his'n unto Cæsar,  
Fer it 's by him I move an' live,  
Frum him my bread an' cheese air;  
I du believe thet all o' me  
Doth bear his superscription, —  
Will, conscience, honor, honesty,  
An' things o' thet description.

60

I du believe in prayer an' praise  
To him thet hez the grantin'  
O' jobs, — in every thin' thet pays,  
But most of all in CANTIN';  
This doth my cup with marcies fill,  
This lays all thought o' sin to rest,  
I *don't* believe in princerple,  
But oh, I *du* in interest.

70

I du believe in bein' this  
Or thet, ez it may happen  
One way or 't other hendiest is  
To ketch the people nappin';  
It aint by princerples nor men  
My preudent course is steadied, —  
I scent wich pays the best, an' then  
Go into it baldheaded.

80

I du believe thet holdin' slaves  
Comes nat'ral to a Presidunt,  
Let 'lone the rowdedow it saves  
To hev a wal-broke precedunt;

Fer any office, small or gret,  
I could n't ax with no face,  
'uthout I 'd ben, thru dry an' wet,  
Th' unrizzest kind o' doughface.

I du believe wutever trash  
'll keep the people in blindness,  
Thet we the Mexieuns can thrash  
Right inter brotherly kindness,  
Thet bombshells, grape, an' powder 'n' ball  
Air good-will's strongest magnets,  
Thet peace, to make it stick at all,  
Must be druv in with bagnets.

90

In short, I firmly du believe  
In Humbug generally,  
Fer it 's a thing thet I perceive  
To hev a solid vally;  
This heth my faithful shepherd ben,  
In pasturs sweet heth led me,  
An' this 'll keep the people green  
To feed ez they hev fed me.

100

May 4, 1848.

## No. VIII

A SECOND LETTER FROM  
B. SAWIN, ESQ.<sup>1</sup>

I SPOSE you wonder ware I be; I can't tell,  
fer the soul o' me,  
Exacly ware I be myself, — meanin' by  
thet the holl o' me.  
Wen I left hum, I hed two legs, an' they  
worn't bad ones neither  
(The scaliest trick they ever played wuz  
bringin' on me hither),  
Now one on 'em 's I dunno ware; — they  
thought I wuz adyin',  
An' sawed it off because they said 't wuz  
kin' o' mortifyin';  
I 'm willin' to believe it wuz, an' yit I don't  
see, nuther,  
Wy one shoud take to feelin' cheap a min-  
nit sooner 'n t' other,  
Sence both wuz equilly to blame; but  
things is ez they be:  
It took on so they took it off, an' thet's  
enough fer me:  
There 's one good thing, though, to be said  
about my wooden new one, —

10

<sup>1</sup> 'Birdofredum Sawin' is a fellow-townsmen of Hosea Biglow, who 'wuz cussed fool enuff to goe atrottin inter Miss Chiff arter a Drum and fife,' beguiled by the 'cruetin sarjunt' of Biglow Paper No. I. His first letter is given in No. II.



The liquor can't git into it ez 't used to in  
the true one;  
So it saves drink; an' then, besides, a feller  
could n't beg  
A gretter blessin' then to hev one ollers  
sober peg;  
It 's true a chap 's in want o' two fer follerin'  
a drum,  
But all the march I'm up to now is jest to  
Kingdom Come.

I 've lost one eye, but thet 's a loss it 's easy  
to supply  
Out o' the glory thet I 've gut, fer thet is all  
my eye;  
An' one is big enough, I guess, by dili-  
gently usin' it,  
To see all I shall ever git by way o' pay fer  
losin' it;  
Off'cers I notice, who git paid fer all our  
thumps an' kickins,  
Du wal by keepin' single eyes arter the fat-  
test pickins;  
So, ez the eye 's put fairly out, I 'll larn to  
go without it,  
An' not allow *myself* to be no gret put out  
about it.  
Now, le' me see, thet is n't all; I used, 'fore  
leavin' Jaalam,  
To count things on my finger-eends, but  
sutthin' seems to ail 'em:  
Ware 's my left hand? Oh, darn it, yes, I  
recollect wut 's come on 't;  
I haint no left arm but my right, an' thet 's  
gut jest a thumb on 't;  
It aint so hendy ez it wuz to cal'late a sum  
on 't.  
I 've hed some ribs broke, — six (I b'lieve),  
— I haint kep' no account on 'em; <sup>30</sup>  
Wen pensions git to be the talk, I 'll settle  
the amount on 'em.  
An' now I 'm speakin' about ribs, it kin' o'  
brings to mind  
One that I could n't never break, — the one  
I lef' behind;  
Ef you should see her, jest clear out the  
spout o' your invention  
An' pour the longest sweetnin' in about an  
annooal pension,  
An' kin' o' hint (in case, you know, the  
critter should refuse to be  
Consoled) I aint so 'xpensive now to keep  
ez wut I used to be;  
There's one arm less, ditto one eye, an'  
then the leg thet 's wooden

Can be took off an' sot away wenever ther 's  
a puddin'.

I spose you think I 'm comin' back ez op-  
perlunt ez thunder, <sup>40</sup>  
With shiploads o' gold images an' varus  
sorts o' plunder;  
Wal, 'fore I vullinteeded, I thought this  
country wuz a sort o'  
Canaan, a reg'lar Promised Land flowin'  
with rum an' water,  
Ware propaty growed up like time, without  
no cultivation,  
An' gold wuz dug ez taters be among our  
Yankee nation,  
Ware nateral advantages were pufficly  
amazin',  
Ware every rock there wuz about with pre-  
cious stuns wuz blazin',  
Ware mill-sites filled the country up ez  
thick ez you could cram 'em,  
An' desput rivers run about a beggin' folks  
to dam 'em;  
Then there were meetinhouses, tu, chockful  
o' gold an' silver <sup>50</sup>  
Thet you could take, an' no one could n't  
hand ye in no bill fer; —  
Thet 's wut I thought afore I went, thet 's  
wut them fellers told us  
Thet stayed to hum an' speechified an' to  
the buzzards sold us;  
I thought thet gold-mines could be gut  
cheaper than Chiny asters,  
An' see myself acomin' back like sixty Ja-  
cob Astors;  
But sech idees soon melted down an' did n't  
leave a grease-spot;  
I vow my holl sheer o' the spiles would n't  
come nigh a V spot;  
Although, most anywares we 've ben, you  
need n't break no locks,  
Nor run no kin' o' risks, to fill your pocket  
full o' rocks.  
I 'xpect I mentioned in my last some o' the  
nateral feetur <sup>60</sup>  
O' this all-flered buggy hole in th' way o'  
awfle creeturs,  
But I fergut to name (new things to speak  
on so abounded)  
How one day you 'll most die o' thust, an'  
'fore the next git drowned.  
The clymit seems to me jest like a teapot  
made o' pewter  
Our Preudence hed, thet would n't pour  
(all she could du) to suit her;



Fust place the leaves 'ould choke the  
 spout, so 's not a drop 'ould dreen  
 out,  
 Then Prude 'ould tip an' tip an' tip, till the  
 holl kit bust clean out,  
 The kiver-hinge-pin bein' lost, tea-leaves  
 an' tea an' kiver  
 'ould all come down *kerwosh* / ez though  
 the dam bust in a river.  
 Jest so 't is here; holl months there aint a  
 day o' rainy weather,  
 An' jest ez th' officers 'ould be a layin' <sup>70</sup>  
 heads together  
 Ez t' how they 'd mix their drink at sech a  
 milingtary deepot, —  
 'T would pour ez though the lid wuz off the  
 everlastin' teapot.  
 The cons'quence is, thet I shall take, wen  
 I'm allowed to leave here,  
 One piece o' propaty along, an' thet 's the  
 shakin' fever;  
 It's reggilar employment, though, an' thet  
 aint thought to harm one,  
 Nor 't aint so tiresome ez it wuz with  
 t' other leg an' arm on;  
 An' it 's a consolation, tu, although it doos  
 n't pay,  
 To hev it said you're some gret shakes in  
 any kin' o' way.  
 'T worn't very long, I tell ye wut, I thought  
 o' fortin-makin', — <sup>80</sup>  
 One day a reg'lar shiver-de-freeze, an' next  
 ez good ez bakin', —  
 One day abrin' in the sand, then smoth'rin'  
 in the mashes, —  
 Git up all sound, be put to bed a mess o'  
 hacks an' smashes.  
 But then, thinks I, at any rate there 's glory  
 to be hed, —  
 Thet 's an investment, arter all, thet may n't  
 turn out so bad;  
 But somehow, wen we 'd fit an' licked, I  
 ollers found the thanks  
 Gut kin' o' lodged afore they come ez low  
 down ez the ranks;  
 The Gin'ral's gut the biggest sheer, the  
 Cunnles next, an' so on, —  
 We never gut a blasted mite o' glory ez I  
 know on;  
 An' spose we hed, I wonder how you're  
 goin' to contrive its <sup>90</sup>  
 Division so 's to give a piece to twenty  
 thousand privits;  
 Ef you should multiply by ten the portion  
 o' the brav'st one,

You would n't git more'n half enough to  
 speak of on a grave-stun;  
 We git the licks, — we're jest the grist  
 thet 's put into War's hoppers;  
 Leftenants is the lowest grade thet helps  
 pick up the coppers.  
 It may suit folks thet go agin a body with  
 a soul in't,  
 An' aint contented with a hide without a  
 bagnet hole in't;  
 But glory is a kin' o' thing I sha'n't pursue  
 no funder,  
 Coz thet 's the off'cers' parquise, — yourn 's  
 on'y jest the murder.

Wal, arter I gin glory up, thinks I at least  
 there 's one <sup>100</sup>  
 Thing in the bills we aint hed yit, an' thet 's  
 the GLORIOUS FUN:  
 Ef once we git to Mexico, we fairly may  
 persume we  
 All day an' night shall revel in the halls o'  
 Montezumy.  
 I'll tell ye wut my revels wuz, an' see how  
 you would like 'em;  
 We never gut inside the hall: the nighest  
 ever I come  
 Wuz stan'in' sentry in the sun (an', fact, it  
 seemed a cent'ry)  
 A ketchin' smells o' biled an' roast thet  
 come out thru the entry,  
 An' hearin' ez I sweltered thru my passes  
 an' repasses,  
 A rat-tat-too o' knives an' forks, a clinkty-  
 clink o' glasses:  
 I can't tell off the bill o' fare the Gin'ral's  
 hed inside; <sup>110</sup>  
 All I know is, thet out o' doors a pair o'  
 soles wuz fried,  
 An' not a hunderd miles away frum ware  
 this child wuz posted,  
 A Massachusetts citizen wuz baked an'  
 biled an' roasted;  
 The on'y thing like revellin' thet ever come  
 to me  
 Wuz bein' routed out o' sleep by thet darned  
 revelee.

They say the quarrel 's settled now; fer my  
 part I've some doubt on 't,  
 't 'll take more fish-skin than folks  
 think to take the rile clean out  
 on 't;  
 At any rate I 'm so used up I can't do no  
 more fightin',

The on'y chance thet 's left to me is politics  
 or writin';  
 Now, ez the people 's gut to hev a miling-  
 tary man,  
 An' I aint nothin' else jest now, I 've hit  
 upon a plan;  
 The can'idatin' line, you know, 'ould suit  
 me to a T,  
 An' ef I lose, 't wunt hurt my ears to lodge  
 another flea;  
 So I 'll set up ez can'ideate fer any kin' o' office  
 (I mean fer any thet includes good easy-  
 cheers an' soffies;  
 Fer ez tu runnin' fer a place ware work 's  
 the time o' day,  
 You know thet 's wut I never did, — ex-  
 cept the other way);  
 Ef it 's the Presidential cheer fer wich I 'd  
 better run,  
 Wut two legs anywares about could keep  
 up with my one?  
 There aint no kin' o' quality in can'ideates,  
 it 's said,  
 So useful ez a wooden leg, — except a  
 wooden head;  
 There 's nothin' aint so poppylar (wy, it 's  
 a perfect sin  
 To think wut Mexico hez paid fer Santy  
 Anny's pin);  
 Then I haint got no princerples, an', sence  
 I wuz knee-high,  
 I never *did* hev any gret, ez you can testify;  
 I 'm a decided peace-man, tu, an' go agin  
 the war, —  
 Fer now the holl on 't 's gone an' past, wut  
 is there to go *for*?  
 Ef, wile you 're 'lectioneerin' round, some  
 curus chaps should beg  
 To know my views o' state affairs, jest  
 answer WOODEN LEG!  
 Ef they aint settisfied with thet, an' kin' o'  
 pry an' doubt  
 An' ax fer sutthin' deffynit, jest say ONE  
 EYE PUT OUT!  
 Thet kin' o' talk I guess you 'll find 'll  
 answer to a charm,  
 An' wen you 're druv tu nigh the wall, hol'  
 up my missin' arm;  
 Ef they should nose round fer a pledge, put  
 on a vartuous look  
 An' tell 'em thet 's percisely wut I never  
 gin nor — took!  
 Then you can call me 'Timbertoes,' —  
 thet 's wut the people likes;

Sutthin' combinin' morril truth with phrases  
 sech ez strikes;  
 Some say the people 's fond o' this, or thet,  
 or wut you please, —  
 I tell ye wut the people want is jest correct  
 idees;  
 'Old Timbertoes,' you see, 's a creed it 's  
 safe to be quite bold on,  
 There 's nothin' in 't the other side can any  
 ways git hold on;  
 It 's a good tangible idee, a sutthin' to embody  
 Thet valooable class o' men who look thru  
 brandy-toddy;  
 It gives a Party Platform, tu, jest level  
 with the mind  
 Of all right-thinkin', honest folks thet  
 mean to go it blind;  
 Then there air other good hooraws to dror  
 on ez you need 'em,  
 Sech ez the ONE-EYED SLARTERER, the  
 BLOODY BIRDOFREDUM:  
 Them 's wut takes hold o' folks thet think,  
 ez well ez o' the masses,  
 An' makes you sartin o' the aid o' good  
 men of all classes.

There 's one thing I 'm in doubt about; in  
 order to be President,  
 It 's absolutely ne'ssary to be a Southern  
 residunt;  
 The Constitution settles thet, an' also thet  
 a feller  
 Must own a nigger o' some sort, jet black,  
 or brown, or yellor.  
 Now I haint no objections agin particklar  
 climes,  
 Nor agin ownin' anythin' (except the truth  
 sometimes),  
 But, ez I haint no capital, up there among  
 ye, maybe,  
 You might raise funds enough fer me to  
 buy a low-priced baby,  
 An' then to suit the No'thern folks, who  
 feel obleeged to say  
 They hate an' ous the very thing they vote  
 fer every day,  
 Say you 're assured I go full but fer Lib-  
 baty's diffusion  
 An' made the purchis on'y jest to spite the  
 Institootion; —  
 But, golly! there 's the currier's hoss upon  
 the pavement pawin'!  
 I 'll be more 'xplicit in my next.

Yourn, BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN.

July 6, 1848.

A FABLE FOR CRITICS<sup>1</sup>

*Reader! walk up at once (it will soon be too late),  
and buy at a perfectly ruinous rate*

## A FABLE FOR CRITICS:

OR, BETTER,

(I LIKE, AS A THING THAT THE READER'S FIRST  
FANCY MAY STRIKE, AN OLD-FASHIONED TITLE-  
PAGE, SUCH AS PRESENTS A TABULAR VIEW OF  
THE VOLUME'S CONTENTS),

A GLANCE AT A FEW OF OUR LIT-  
ERARY PROGENIES

(MRS. MALAPROP'S WORD)

FROM THE TUB OF DIOGENES;

A VOCAL AND MUSICAL MEDLEY,

THAT IS,

A SERIES OF JOKES

By A Wonderful Quiz,

WHO ACCOMPANIES HIMSELF WITH A RUB-A-  
DUB-DUB, FULL OF SPIRIT AND GRACE, ON THE  
TOP OF THE TUB.

*Set forth in October, the 31st day,  
In the year '48, G. P. Putnam, Broadway.*

<sup>1</sup> This *jeu d'esprit* was extemporized, I may fairly say, so rapidly was it written, purely for my own amusement and with no thought of publication. I sent daily instalments of it to a friend in New York, the late Charles F. Briggs. He urged me to let it be printed, and I at last consented to its anonymous publication. The secret was kept till after several persons had laid claim to its authorship. (LOWELL.)

On the writing of the 'Fable,' its progress from week to week, and Lowell's presentation of the copyright to his friend Briggs, see Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. i, pp. 238-255.

Holmes said of it: 'It is capital — crammed full and rammed down hard — powder (lots of it) — shot slugs — bullets — very little wadding, and that is gun-cotton — all crowded into a rusty looking sort of a blunderbuss barrel as it were — capped with a percussion preface — and cocked with a title-page as apropos as a wink to a joke.' (Morse's *Life of Holmes*, vol. ii, p. 107.)

The original title-page is given above.

It being the commonest mode of procedure, I premise a few candid remarks

TO THE READER:—

This trifle, begun to please only myself and my own private fancy, was laid on the shelf. But some friends, who had seen it, induced me, by dint of saying they liked it, to put it in print. That is, having come to that very conclusion, I asked their advice when 't would make no confusion. For though (in the gentlest of ways) they had hinted it was scarce worth the while, I should doubtless have printed it.

I began it, intending a Fable, a frail, slender thing, rhyme-ywinged, with a sting in its tail. But, by addings and alterings not previously planned, digressions chance-hatched, like birds' eggs in the sand, and dawdlings to suit every whimsey's demand (always freeing the bird which I held in my hand, for the two perched, perhaps out of reach, in the tree), — it grew by degrees to the size which you see. I was like the old woman that carried the calf, and my neighbors, like hers, no doubt, wonder and laugh; and when, my strained arms with their grown burthen full, I call it my Fable, they call it a bull.

Having scrawled at full gallop (as far as that goes) in a style that is neither good verse nor bad prose, and being a person whom nobody knows, some people will say I am rather more free with my readers than it is becoming to be, that I seem to expect them to wait on my leisure in following wherever I wander at pleasure, that, in short, I take more than a young author's lawful ease, and laugh in a queer way so like Mephistopheles, that the Public will doubt, as they grope through my rhythm, if in truth I am making fun of them or *with* them.

So the excellent Public is hereby assured that the sale of my book is already secured. For there is not a poet throughout the whole land but will purchase a copy or two out of hand, in the fond expectation of being amused in it, by seeing his betters cut up and abused in it. Now, I find, by a pretty exact calculation, there are some-

thing like ten thousand bards in the nation, of that special variety whom the Review and Magazine critics call *lofty* and *true*, and about thirty thousand (*this* tribe is increasing) of the kinds who are termed *full of promise* and *pleasing*. The Public will see by a glance at this schedule, that they cannot expect me to be over-sedulous about courting them, since it seems I have got enough fuel made sure of for boiling my pot.

As for such of our poets as find not their names mentioned once in my pages, with praises or blames, let them SEND IN THEIR CARDS, without further DELAY, to my friend G. P. PUTNAM, Esquire, in Broadway, where a LIST will be kept with the strictest regard to the day and the hour of receiving the card. Then, taking them up as I chance to have time (that is, if their names can be twisted in rhyme), I will honestly give each his PROPER POSITION, at the rate of ONE AUTHOR to each NEW EDITION. Thus a PREMIUM is offered sufficiently HIGH (as the magazines say when they tell their best lie) to induce bards to CLUB their resources and buy the balance of every edition, until they have all of them fairly been run through the mill.

One word to such readers (judicious and wise) as read books with something behind the mere eyes, of whom in the country, perhaps, there are two, including myself, gentle reader, and you. All the characters sketched in this slight *jeu d'esprit*, though, it may be, they seem, here and there, rather free, and drawn from a somewhat too cynical standpoint, are *meant* to be faithful, for that is the grand point, and none but an owl would feel sore at a rub from a jester who tells you, without any subterfuge, that he sits in Diogenes' tub.

PHŒBUS, sitting one day in a laurel-tree's shade,  
Was reminded of Daphne, of whom it was made,  
For the god being one day too warm in his wooing,  
She took to the tree to escape his pursuing;  
Be the cause what it might, from his offers she shrunk,  
And, Ginevra-like, shut herself up in a trunk;  
And, though 't was a step into which he had driven her,

He somehow or other had never forgiven her;

Her memory he nursed as a kind of a tonic,  
Something bitter to chew when he'd play the Byronic,

And I can't count the obstinate nymphs that he brought over

By a strange kind of smile he put on when he thought of her.

'My case is like Dido's,' he sometimes remarked;

'When I last saw my love, she was fairly embarked

In a laurel, as *she* thought — but (ah, how Fate mocks !)

She has found it by this time a very bad box;  
Let hunters from me take this saw when they need it, —

You're not always sure of your game when you've treed it.

Just conceive such a change taking place in one's mistress !

What romance would be left ? — who can flatter or kiss trees ?

And, for mercy's sake, how could one keep up a dialogue

With a dull wooden thing that will live and will die a log, —

Not to say that the thought would forever intrude

That you've less chance to win her the more she is wood ?

Ah ! it went to my heart, and the memory still grieves,

To see those loved graces all taking their leaves;

Those charms beyond speech, so enchanting but now,

As they left me forever, each making its bough !

If her tongue *had* a tang sometimes more than was right,

Her new bark is worse than ten times her old bite.'

. . . . .

Apollo looked up, hearing footsteps approaching,

And slipped out of sight the new rhymes he was broaching, —

'Good day, Mr. D——, I'm happy to meet

<sup>1</sup> Duyckinck. Evert A. Duyckinck, with his brother George L. Duyckinck, published a 'Cyclopædia of American Literature, embracing personal and critical notices of authors, and selections from their writings.'

With a scholar so ripe, and a critic so neat,  
 Who through Grub Street the soul of a  
 gentleman carries;  
 What news from that suburb of London  
 and Paris  
 Which latterly makes such shrill claims to  
 monopolize  
 The credit of being the New World's me-  
 tropolis ?'

' Why, nothing of consequence, save this  
 attack  
 On my friend there, behind, by some pitiful  
 hack,  
 Who thinks every national author a poor  
 one,  
 That is n't a copy of something that's for-  
 eign,  
 And assaults the American Dick—'  
 ' Nay, 't is clear  
 That your Damon there's fond of a flea in  
 his ear,  
 And, if no one else furnished them gratis,  
 on tick  
 He would buy some himself, just to hear  
 the old click;  
 Why, I honestly think, if some fool in  
 Japan  
 Should turn up his nose at the "Poems on  
 Man"  
 (Which contain many verses as fine, by the  
 bye,  
 As any that lately came under my eye),  
 Your friend there by some inward instinct  
 would know it,  
 Would get it translated, reprinted, and show  
 it;  
 As a man might take off a high stock to  
 exhibit  
 The autograph round his own neck of the  
 gibbet;  
 Nor would let it rest so, but fire column  
 after column,  
 Signed Cato, or Brutus, or something as  
 solemn,  
 By way of displaying his critical crosses,  
 And tweaking that poor transatlantic pro-  
 boscis,  
 His broadsides resulting (this last there's  
 no doubt of)  
 In successively sinking the craft they're  
 fired out of.  
 Now nobody knows when an author is  
 hit,  
 If he have not a public hysterical fit;

Let him only keep close in his snug garret's  
 dim ether,  
 And nobody'd think of his foes—or of  
 him either;  
 If an author have any least fibre of worth  
 in him,  
 Abuse would but tickle the organ of mirth  
 in him;  
 All the critics on earth cannot crush with  
 their ban  
 One word that's in tune with the nature of  
 man.'

' But stay, here comes Tityrus Griswold,<sup>1</sup>  
 and leads on  
 The flocks whom he first plucks alive, and  
 then feeds on, —  
 A loud-cackling swarm, in whose feathers  
 warm drest,  
 He goes for as perfect a — swan as the  
 rest.

' There comes Emerson first, whose rich  
 words, every one,  
 Are like gold nails in temples to hang tro-  
 phies on,  
 Whose prose is grand verse, while his  
 verse, the Lord knows,  
 Is some of it pr— No, 't is not even  
 prose;  
 I'm speaking of metres; some poems have  
 welled  
 From those rare depths of soul that have  
 ne'er been excelled;  
 They're not epics, but that does n't matter  
 a pin,  
 In creating, the only hard thing's to begin;  
 A grass-blade's no easier to make than an  
 oak;  
 If you've once found the way, you've  
 achieved the grand stroke;  
 In the worst of his poems are mines of rich  
 matter,  
 But thrown in a heap with a crash and a  
 clatter;  
 Now it is not one thing nor another alone  
 Makes a poem, but rather the general  
 tone,  
 The something pervading, uniting the  
 whole,  
 The before unconceived, unconceivable soul,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. R. W. Griswold published in 1842 *The Poets and Poetry of America*, in 1846 *The Prose Writers of America*, and in 1848 *The Female Poets of America*.

So that just in removing this trifle or that,  
 you  
 Take away, as it were, a chief limb of the  
 statue;  
 Roots, wood, bark, and leaves singly perfect may be,  
 But, clapt hodge-podge together, they  
 don't make a tree.

‘ But, to come back to Emerson (whom,  
 by the way,  
 I believe we left waiting), — his is, we may  
 say,  
 A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders,  
 whose range  
 Has Olympus for one pole, for t' other the  
 Exchange;  
 He seems, to my thinking (although I'm  
 afraid  
 The comparison must, long ere this, have  
 been made),  
 A Plotinus-Montaigne, where the Egyp-  
 tian's gold mist  
 And the Gascon's shrewd wit cheek-by-jowl  
 coexist;  
 All admire, and yet scarcely six converts  
 he's got  
 To I don't (nor they either) exactly know  
 what;  
 For though he builds glorious temples, 't is  
 odd  
 He leaves never a doorway to get in a  
 god.  
 'T is refreshing to old-fashioned people like  
 me  
 To meet such a primitive Pagan as he,  
 In whose mind all creation is duly respected  
 As parts of himself — just a little projected;  
 And who's willing to worship the stars and  
 the sun,  
 A convert to — nothing but Emerson. 110  
 So perfect a balance there is in his head,  
 That he talks of things sometimes as if they  
 were dead;  
 Life, nature, love, God, and affairs of that  
 sort,  
 He looks at as merely ideas; in short,  
 As if they were fossils stuck round in a  
 cabinet,  
 Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere  
 dab in it;  
 Composed just as he is inclined to con-  
 jecture her,  
 Namely, one part pure earth, ninety-nine  
 parts pure lecturer;

You are filled with delight at his clear de-  
 monstration,  
 Each figure, word, gesture, just fits the  
 occasion,  
 With the quiet precision of science he'll  
 sort 'em,  
 But you can't help suspecting the whole a  
*post mortem*.

‘ There are persons, mole-blind to the  
 soul's make and style,  
 Who insist on a likeness 'twixt him and  
 Carlyle;  
 To compare him with Plato would be vastly  
 fairer,  
 Carlyle's the more burly, but E. is the  
 rarer;  
 He sees fewer objects, but clearer, true-  
 lier,  
 If C.'s as original, E.'s more peculiar;  
 That he's more of a man you might say of  
 the one,  
 Of the other he's more of an Emerson; 120  
 C.'s the Titan, as shaggy of mind as of  
 limb, —  
 E. the clear-eyed Olympian, rapid and slim;  
 The one's two thirds Norseman, the other  
 half Greek,  
 Where the one's most abounding, the  
 other's to seek;  
 C.'s generals require to be seen in the  
 mass, —  
 E.'s specialties gain if enlarged by the  
 glass;  
 C. gives nature and God his own fits of  
 the blues,  
 And rims common-sense things with mys-  
 tical hues, —  
 E. sits in a mystery calm and intense,  
 And looks coolly around him with sharp  
 common-sense; 140  
 C. shows you how every-day matters unite  
 With the dim transdiurnal recesses of  
 night, —  
 While E., in a plain, preternatural way,  
 Makes mysteries matters of mere every  
 day;  
 C. draws all his characters quite à la Fu-  
 seli, —  
 Not sketching their bundles of muscles and  
 thews illy,  
 He paints with a brush so untamed and  
 profuse  
 They seem nothing but bundles of muscles  
 and thews;



E. is rather like Flaxman, lines strait and severe,  
And a colorless outline, but full, round, and clear; —

To the men he thinks worthy he frankly  
accords 150

The design of a white marble statue in words.

C. labors to get at the centre, and then  
Take a reckoning from there of his actions  
and men;

E. calmly assumes the said centre as  
granted,

And, given himself, has whatever is wanted.

‘He has imitators in scores, who omit  
No part of the man but his wisdom and  
wit, —

Who go carefully o’er the sky-blue of his  
brain,

And when he has skimmed it once, skim it  
again; 160

If at all they resemble him, you may be sure  
it is

Because their shoals mirror his mists and  
obscurities,

As a mud-puddle seems deep as heaven for  
a minute,

While a cloud that floats o’er is reflected  
within it.

‘There comes —, for instance; to see  
him’s rare sport,

Tread in Emerson’s tracks with legs pain-  
fully short;

How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red  
in the face,

To keep step with the mystagogue’s natural  
pace!

He follows as close as a stick to a rocket,  
His fingers exploring the prophet’s each  
pocket. 170

Fie, for shame, brother bard; with good fruit  
of your own,

Can’t you let Neighbor Emerson’s orchards  
alone?

Besides, ’t is no use, you ’ll not find e’en a  
core, —

— has picked up all the windfalls before.  
They might strip every tree, and E. never

would catch ’em,

His Hesperides have no rude dragon to  
watch ’em;

When they send him a dishful, and ask him  
to try ’em,

He never suspects how the sly rogues came  
by ’em;

He wonders why ’t is there are none such  
his trees on,

And thinks ’em the best he has tasted this  
season. 180

‘There is Bryant,<sup>1</sup> as quiet, as cool, and  
as dignified,

As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is  
ignified,

Save when by reflection ’t is kindled o’  
nights

With a semblance of flame by the chill  
Northern Lights.

He may rank (Griswold says so) first bard  
of your nation

(There’s no doubt that he stands in su-  
preme iceolation),

Your topmost Parnassus he may set his  
heel on,

But no warm applauses come, peal follow-  
ing peal on, —

He’s too smooth and too polished to hang  
any zeal on:

Unqualified merits, I ’ll grant, if you  
choose, he has ’em, 190

But he lacks the one merit of kindling  
enthusiasm;

If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,  
Like being stirred up with the very North  
Pole.

‘He is very nice reading in summer,  
but inter

Nos, we don’t want extra freezing in winter;  
Take him up in the depth of July, my ad-  
vice is,

<sup>1</sup> Compare three passages in *Lowell’s Letters* (quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers): —

‘The Bryant is funny, and as fair as I could make it, immitigably just. Indeed I have endeavored to be so in all. . . . The only verses I shall add regarding him are some complimentary ones which I left for a happier mood after I had written the comic part.’ . . . *May 12, 1848*. See the whole passage, *Lowell’s Letters*, vol. i, p. 131.

‘I am quite sensible that I did not do Mr. Bryant justice in the “Fable.” But there was no personal feeling in what I said — though I have regretted what I did say because it might seem personal. I am now asked to write a review of his poems for the *North American*. If I do, I shall try to do him justice.’ *January 11, 1855*; vol. i, p. 221.

‘I am all the gladder I wrote my poem for Bryant’s birthday [“On Board the Seventy-Six,”] — a kind of palinode to what I said of him in the “Fable for Critics,” which has something of youth’s infallibility in it, or at any rate of youth’s irresponsibility.’ *February 9, 1857*. See the whole letter (to Mr. Richard Watson Gilder), *Lowell’s Letters*, vol. ii, p. 334.



When you feel an Egyptian devotion to  
ices.

But, deduct all you can, there's enough  
that's right good in him,

He has a true soul for field, river, and  
wood in him;

And his heart, in the midst of brick walls,  
or where'er it is,

Glow<sup>200</sup>s, softens, and thrills with the tender-  
est charities —

To you mortals that delve in this trade-  
ridden planet?

No, to old Berkshire's hills, with their  
limestone and granite.

If you're one who *in loco* (add *foco* here)  
*desipis*,

You will get of his outermost heart (as I  
guess) a piece;

But you'd get deeper down if you came as  
a precipice,

And would break the last seal of its in-  
wardest fountain,

If you only could palm yourself off for a  
mountain.

Mr. Quivis, or somebody quite as discerning,  
Some scholar who's hourly expecting his  
learning,

Calls B. the American Wordsworth; but  
Wordsworth<sup>210</sup>

May be rated at more than your whole  
tuneful herd's worth.

No, don't be absurd, he's an excellent  
Bryant;

But, my friends, you'll endanger the life  
of your client,

By attempting to stretch him up into a  
giant:

If you choose to compare him, I think  
there are two per-

-sons fit for a parallel — Thomson and  
Cowper;<sup>1</sup>

I don't mean exactly, — there's something  
of each,

There's T.'s love of nature, C.'s penchant  
to preach;

Just mix up their minds so that C.'s spice  
of craziness<sup>220</sup>

Shall balance and neutralize T.'s turn for  
laziness,

And it gives you a brain cool, quite fric-  
tionless, quiet,

<sup>1</sup> To demonstrate quickly and easily how per-  
-versely absurd 't is to sound this name *Cowper*.  
As people in general call him named *super*,  
I remark that he rhymes it himself with horse-  
trooper.

Whose internal police nips the buds of all  
riot, —

A brain like a permanent strait-jacket put  
on

The heart that strives vainly to burst off a  
button, —

A brain which, without being slow or me-  
chanic,

Does more than a larger less drilled, more  
volcanic;

He's a Cowper condensed, with no crazi-  
ness bitten,

And the advantage that Wordsworth be-  
fore him had written.

'But, my dear little bardlings, don't  
prick up your ears<sup>230</sup>

Nor suppose I would rank you and Bryant  
as peers;

If I call him an iceberg, I don't mean to say  
There is nothing in that which is grand in  
its way;

He is almost the one of your poets that  
knows

How much grace, strength, and dignity lie  
in Repose;

If he sometimes fall short, he is too wise  
to mar

His thought's modest fulness by going too  
far;

'T would be well if your authors should all  
make a trial

Of what virtue there is in severe self-  
denial,

And measure their writings by Hesiod's  
staff,

Which teaches that all has less value than<sup>240</sup>  
half.

'There is Whittier, whose swelling and  
vehement heart

Strains the strait-breasted drab of the  
Quaker apart,

And reveals the live Man, still supreme  
and erect,

Underneath the bemummifying wrappers of  
sect;

There was ne'er a man born who had more  
of the swing

Of the true lyric bard and all that kind of  
thing;

And his failures arise (though he seem not  
to know it)

From the very same cause that has made  
him a poet, —

A fervor of mind which knows no separation  
 Twixt simple excitement and pure inspiration,<sup>250</sup>  
 As my Pythoness erst sometimes erred  
 from not knowing  
 If 't were I or mere wind through her tripod  
 was blowing;  
 Let his mind once get head in its favorite  
 direction  
 And the torrent of verse bursts the dams  
 of reflection,  
 While, borne with the rush of the metre  
 along,  
 The poet may chance to go right or go  
 wrong,  
 Content with the whirl and delirium of  
 song;  
 Then his grammar's not always correct,  
 nor his rhymes,  
 And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics  
 sometimes,<sup>260</sup>  
 Not his best, though, for those are struck  
 off at white-heats  
 When the heart in his breast like a trip-  
 hammer beats,  
 And can ne'er be repeated again any more  
 Than they could have been carefully plot-  
 ted before:  
 Like old what 's-his-name there at the bat-  
 tle of Hastings  
 (Who, however, gave more than mere  
 rhythmical bastings),  
 Our Quaker leads off metaphorical fights  
 For reform and whatever they call human  
 rights,  
 Both singing and striking in front of the war,  
 And hitting his foes with the mallet of  
 Thor;<sup>270</sup>  
*Anne haec*, one exclaims, on beholding his  
 knocks,  
*Vestis filii tui*, O leather-clad Fox?  
 Can that be thy son, in the battle's mid din,  
 Preaching brotherly love and then driving  
 it in  
 To the brain of the tough old Goliath of sin,  
 With the smoothest of pebbles from Cas-  
 taly's spring  
 Impressed on his hard moral sense with a  
 sling?

'All honor and praise to the right-hearted  
 bard  
 Who was true to The Voice when such ser-  
 vice was hard,

Who himself was so free he dared sing for  
 the slave  
 When to look but a protest in silence was  
 brave;  
 All honor and praise to the women and men  
 Who spoke out for the dumb and the  
 down-trodden then!  
 It needs not to name them, already for  
 each  
 I see History preparing the statue and  
 niche;  
 They were harsh, but shall you be so shocked  
 at hard words  
 Who have beaten your pruning-hooks up  
 into swords,  
 Whose rewards and hurrahs men are surer  
 to gain  
 By the reaping of men and of women than  
 grain?  
 Why should you stand aghast at their fierce  
 wordy war, if<sup>280</sup>  
 You scalp one another for Bank or for  
 Tariff?  
 Your calling them cut-throats and knaves  
 all day long  
 Does n't prove that the use of hard lan-  
 guage is wrong;  
 While the World's heart beats quicker to  
 think of such men  
 As signed Tyranny's doom with a bloody  
 steel-pen,  
 While on Fourth-of-Julys beardless orators  
 fright one  
 With hints at Harmodius and Aristogeiton,  
 You need not look shy at your sisters and  
 brothers  
 Who stab with sharp words for the free-  
 dom of others;—  
 No, a wreath, twine a wreath for the loyal  
 and true<sup>300</sup>  
 Who, for sake of the many, dared stand  
 with the few,  
 Not of blood-spattered laurel for enemies  
 braved,  
 But of broad, peaceful oak-leaves for citi-  
 zens saved!

'There is Hawthorne, with genius so  
 shrinking and rare  
 That you hardly at first see the strength  
 that is there;  
 A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,  
 So earnest, so graceful, so lithe and so fleet,  
 Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet;

**T** is as if a rough oak that for ages had  
stood,  
**W**ith his gnarled bony branches like ribs of  
the wood,  
**S**hould bloom, after cycles of struggle and  
scathe,  
**W**ith a single anemone trembly and rathe;  
**H**is strength is so tender, his wildness so  
meek,  
**T**hat a suitable parallel sets one to seek, —  
**H**e 's a John Bunyan Fouqué, a Puritan  
Tieck;  
**W**hen Nature was shaping him, clay was  
not granted  
**F**or making so full-sized a man as she  
wanted,  
**S**o, to fill out her model, a little she spared  
**F**rom some finer-grained stuff for a woman  
prepared,  
**A**nd she could not have hit a more excellent  
plan  
**F**or making him fully and perfectly man.

‘Here 's Cooper, who 's written six vol-  
umes to show  
He 's as good as a lord: well, let 's grant  
that he 's so;  
If a person prefer that description of praise,  
Why, a coronet 's certainly cheaper than  
bays;  
But he need take no pains to convince us  
he 's not  
(As his enemies say) the American Scott.  
Choose any twelve men, and let C. read  
aloud  
That one of his novels of which he 's most  
proud,  
And I 'd lay any bet that, without ever  
quitting  
Their box, they 'd be all, to a man, for ac-  
quitting.  
He has drawn you one character, though,  
that is new,  
One wildflower he 's plucked that is wet  
with the dew  
Of this fresh Western world, and, the thing  
not to mince,  
He has done naught but copy it ill ever  
since;  
His Indians, with proper respect be it said,  
Are just Natty Bumppo, daubed over with  
red,  
And his very Long Toms are the same  
useful Nat,

Rigged up in duck pants and a sou'wester  
hat  
(Though once in a Coffin, a good chance  
was found  
To have slipped the old fellow away under-  
ground).  
All his other men-figures are clothes upon  
sticks,  
The *dernière chemise* of a man in a fix  
(As a captain besieged, when his garrison 's  
small,  
Sets up caps upon poles to be seen o'er the  
wall);  
And the women he draws from one model  
don't vary,  
All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie.  
When a character 's wanted, he goes to the  
task  
As a cooper would do in composing a  
cask;  
He picks out the staves, of their qualities  
heedful,  
Just hoops them together as tight as is  
needful,  
And, if the best fortune should crown the  
attempt, he  
Has made at the most something wooden  
and empty.

‘Don't suppose I would underrate Coop-  
er's abilities;  
If I thought you 'd do that, I should feel  
very ill at ease;  
The men who have given to *one* character life  
And objective existence are not very rife;  
You may number them all, both prose-  
writers and singers,  
Without overrunning the bounds of your  
fingers,  
And Natty won't go to oblivion quicker  
Than Adams the Parson or Primrose the  
vicar.

‘There is one thing in Cooper I like,  
too, and that is  
That on manners he lectures his country-  
men gratis;  
Not precisely so either, because, for a  
rarity,  
He is paid for his tickets in unpopularity.  
Now he may overcharge his American pic-  
tures,  
But you 'll grant there 's a good deal of  
truth in his strictures;  
And I honor the man who is willing to sink

Half his present repute for the freedom to  
think,  
And, when he has thought, be his cause  
strong or weak, 370  
Will risk t' other half for the freedom to  
speak,  
Caring naught for what vengeance the mob  
has in store,  
Let that mob be the upper ten thousand or  
lower.

'There are truths you Americans need to  
be told,  
And it never 'll refute them to swagger and  
scold;  
John Bull, looking o'er the Atlantic, in  
choler  
At your aptness for trade, says you worship  
the dollar;  
But to scorn such eye-dollar-try's what  
very few do,  
And John goes to that church as often as  
you do.  
No matter what John says, don't try to  
outcrow him, 380  
'T is enough to go quietly on and outgrow  
him;  
Like most fathers, Bull hates to see Num-  
ber One  
Displacing himself in the mind of his son,  
And detests the same faults in himself  
he'd neglected  
When he sees them again in his child's  
glass reflected;  
To love one another you're too like by half;  
If he is a bull, you're a pretty stout calf,  
And tear your own pasture for naught but  
to show  
What a nice pair of horns you're begin-  
ning to grow.

'There are one or two things I should  
just like to hint, 390  
For you don't often get the truth told you  
in print;  
The most of you (this is what strikes all  
beholders)  
Have a mental and physical stoop in the  
shoulders;  
Though you ought to be free as the winds  
and the waves,  
You've the gait and the manners of run-  
away slaves;  
Though you brag of your New World, you  
don't half believe in it;

And as much of the Old as is possible  
weave in it;  
Your goddess of freedom, a tight, buxom  
girl,  
With lips like a cherry and teeth like a  
pearl,  
With eyes bold as Herë's, and hair floating  
free, 400  
And full of the sun as the spray of the sea,  
Who can sing at a husking or romp at a  
shearing,  
Who can trip through the forests alone  
without fearing,  
Who can drive home the cows with a song  
through the grass,  
Keeps glancing aside into Europe's cracked  
glass,  
Hides her red hands in gloves, pinches up  
her lithe waist,  
And makes herself wretched with transma-  
rine taste;  
She loses her fresh country charm when  
she takes  
Any mirror except her own rivers and  
lakes.

'You steal Englishmen's books and think  
Englishmen's thought, 410  
With their salt on her tail your wild eagle  
is caught;  
Your literature suits its each whisper and  
motion  
To what will be thought of it over the  
ocean;  
The cast clothes of Europe your statesman-  
ship tries  
And mumbles again the old blarneys and  
lies;—  
Forget Europe wholly, your veins throb  
with blood,  
To which the dull current in hers is but  
mud:  
Let her sneer, let her say your experiment  
fails,  
In her voice there's a tremble e'en now  
while she rails,  
And your shore will soon be in the nature  
of things 420  
Covered thick with gilt drift-wood of cast-  
away kings,  
Where alone, as it were in a Longfellow's  
Waif,  
Her fugitive pieces will find themselves safe.  
O my friends, thank your god, if you have  
one, that he

'Twixt the Old World and you set the gulf  
 of a sea;  
 Be strong-backed, brown-handed, upright  
 as your pines,  
 By the scale of a hemisphere shape your  
 designs,  
 Be true to yourselves and this new nine-  
 teenth age,  
 As a statue by Powers, or a picture by Page,  
 Plough, sail, forge, build, carve, paint,  
 make all over new, 430  
 To your own New-World instincts contrive  
 to be true,  
 Keep your ears open wide to the Future's  
 first call,  
 Be whatever you will, but yourselves first  
 of all,  
 Stand fronting the dawn on Toil's heaven-  
 scaling peaks,  
 And become my new race of more practical  
 Greeks.'

Here Miranda<sup>1</sup> came up, and said, 'Phœ-  
 bus! you know  
 That the Infinite Soul has its infinite woe,  
 As I ought to know, having lived cheek by  
 jowl,  
 Since the day I was born, with the Infinite  
 Soul;  
 I myself introduced, I myself, I alone, 440  
 To my Land's better life authors solely my  
 own,  
 Who the sad heart of earth on their shoul-  
 ders have taken,  
 Whose works sound a depth by Life's  
 quiet unshaken,  
 Such as Shakespeare, for instance, the  
 Bible, and Bacon,  
 Not to mention my own works; Time's  
 nadir is fleet,  
 And, as for myself, I'm quite out of con-  
 ceit' —

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Fuller. Lowell wrote to Briggs, March 26, 1848: 'I think I shall say nothing about Margaret Fuller (though she offer so fair a target), because she has done me an ill-natured turn. I shall revenge myself amply upon her by writing better. She is a very foolish, conceited woman, who has got together a great deal of information, but not enough *knowledge* to save her from being ill-tempered. However, the temptation may be too strong for me. It certainly would have been if she had never said anything about me. Even Maria thinks I ought to give her a line or two.' *Lowell's Letters*, vol. i, p. 128. Quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.) See Margaret Fuller's *Papers on Literature and Art*, or Greenleaf's *Lowell*, p. 63; and Poe's review of the *Fable for Critics*, in his *Works*, vol. xiii, pp. 165-175.

'Quite out of conceit! I'm enchanted to  
 hear it,'  
 Cried Apollo aside. 'Who'd have thought  
 she was near it?  
 To be sure, one is apt to exhaust those  
 commodities  
 One uses too fast, yet in this case as odd  
 it is 450  
 As if Neptune should say to his turbot  
 and whittings,  
 "I'm as much out of salt as Miranda's own  
 writings"  
 (Which, as she in her own happy manner  
 has said,  
 Sound a depth, for 't is one of the functions  
 of lead).  
 She often has asked me if I could not find  
 A place somewhere near me that suited her  
 mind;  
 I know but a single one vacant, which she,  
 With her rare talent that way, would fit to  
 a T.  
 And it would not imply any pause or cessa-  
 tion  
 In the work she esteems her peculiar voca-  
 tion, — 460  
 She may enter on duty to-day, if she chooses,  
 And remain Tiring-woman for life to the  
 Muses.'

'There comes Poe, with his raven, like  
 Barnaby Rudge,  
 Three fifths of him genius and two fifths  
 sheer fudge,  
 Who talks like a book of iambs and pen-  
 tameters,  
 In a way to make people of common sense  
 damn metres,  
 Who has written some things quite the  
 best of their kind,  
 But the heart somehow seems all squeezed  
 out by the mind,  
 Who — But hey-day! What's this?  
 Messieurs Mathews and Poe,  
 You must n't fling mud-balls at Longfellow  
 so, 470  
 Does it make a man worse that his charac-  
 ter's such  
 As to make his friends love him (as you  
 think) too much?  
 Why, there is not a bard at this moment  
 alive  
 More willing than he that his fellows  
 should thrive;

While you are abusing him thus, even now  
 He would help either one of you out of a  
 slough;  
 You may say that he's smooth and all that  
 till you're hoarse,  
 But remember that elegance also is force;  
 After polishing granite as much as you  
 will,  
 The heart keeps its tough old persistency  
 still; <sup>480</sup>  
 Deduct all you can, *that* still keeps you at  
 bay;  
 Why, he'll live till men weary of Collins  
 and Gray.  
 I'm not over-fond of Greek metres in Eng-  
 lish,  
 To me rhyme's a gain, so it be not too jin-  
 glish,  
 And your modern hexameter verses are no  
 more  
 Like Greek ones than sleek Mr. Pope is  
 like Homer;  
 As the roar of the sea to the coo of a pigeon  
 is,  
 So, compared to your moderns, sounds old  
 Melesigenes;  
 I may be too partial, the reason, perhaps,  
 o't is  
 That I've heard the old blind man recite  
 his own rhapsodies, <sup>490</sup>  
 And my ear with that music impregnate  
 may be,  
 Like the poor exiled shell with the soul of  
 the sea,  
 Or as one can't bear Strauss when his na-  
 ture is cloven  
 To its deeps within deeps by the stroke of  
 Beethoven;  
 But, set that aside, and 't is truth that I  
 speak,  
 Had Theocritus written in English, not  
 Greek,  
 I believe that his exquisite sense would  
 scarce change a line  
 In that rare, tender, virgin-like pastoral  
 Evangeline.  
 That's not ancient nor modern, its place is  
 apart  
 Where time has no sway, in the realm of  
 pure Art, <sup>500</sup>  
 'T is a shrine of retreat from Earth's hub-  
 bub and strife  
 As quiet and chaste as the author's own  
 life.

'What! Irving? thrice welcome, warm  
 heart and fine brain,  
 You bring back the happiest spirit from  
 Spain,  
 And the gravest sweet humor, that ever  
 were there  
 Since Cervantes met death in his gentle  
 despair;  
 Nay, don't be embarrassed, nor look so be-  
 seeching,  
 I sha'n't run directly against my own  
 preaching,  
 And, having just laughed at their Raphaels  
 and Dantes,  
 Go to setting you up beside matchless Cer-  
 vantes; <sup>510</sup>  
 But allow me to speak what I honestly  
 feel, —  
 To a true poet-heart add the fun of Dick  
 Steele,  
 Throw in all of Addison, *minus* the chill,  
 With the whole of that partnership's stock  
 and good-will,  
 Mix well, and while stirring, hum o'er, as  
 a spell,  
 The fine *old* English Gentleman, simmer it  
 well,  
 Sweeten just to your own private liking,  
 then strain,  
 That only the finest and clearest re-  
 main,  
 Let it stand out of doors till a soul it re-  
 ceives  
 From the warm lazy sun loitering down  
 through green leaves, <sup>520</sup>  
 And you'll find a choice nature, not wholly  
 deserving  
 A name either English or Yankee, — just  
 Irving.'

Here, 'Forgive me, Apollo,' I cried,  
 'while I pour  
 My heart out to my birthplace:<sup>1</sup> O loved  
 more and more  
 Dear Baystate, from whose rocky bosom  
 thy sons  
 Should suck milk, strong-will-giving, brave,  
 such as runs

<sup>1</sup> 'The only passage in "A Fable for Critics" which he [later] dwelt upon with genuine delight was his apostrophe to Massachusetts, and that is almost out of key with the rest of the poem.' (Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. I, p. 266.) The passage should now be read as an apostrophe to America rather than to Massachusetts. It is far more true of the West than of New England, and of America as a whole than of any section.

In the veins of old Graylock — who is it  
     that dares  
 Call thee pedler, a soul wrapped in bank-  
     books and shares?  
 It is false! She's a Poet! I see, as I  
     write,  
 Along the far railroad the steam-snake  
     glide white,  
 The cataract-throb of her mill-hearts I<sup>530</sup>  
     hear,  
 The swift strokes of trip-hammers weary  
     my ear,  
 Sledges ring upon anvils, through logs the  
     saw screams,  
 Blocks swing to their place, beetles drive  
     home the beams: —  
 It is songs such as these that she croons to  
     the din  
 Of her fast-flying shuttles, year out and  
     year in,  
 While from earth's farthest corner there  
     comes not a breeze  
 But wafts her the buzz of her gold-glean-  
     ing bees:  
 What though those horn hands have as yet  
     found small time  
 For painting and sculpture and music and  
     rhyme?<sup>540</sup>  
 These will come in due order; the need  
     that pressed sorest  
 Was to vanquish the seasons, the ocean, the  
     forest,  
 To bridle and harness the rivers, the  
     steam,  
 Making those whirl her mill-wheels, this  
     tug in her team,  
 To vassalize old tyrant Winter, and  
     make  
 Him delve surlily for her on river and  
     lake; —  
 When this New World was parted, she  
     strove not to shirk  
 Her lot in the heirdom, the tough, silent  
     Work,  
 The hero-share ever from Herakles down  
     To Odin, the Earth's iron sceptre and  
     crown:<sup>550</sup>  
 Yes, thou dear, noble Mother! if ever  
     men's praise  
 Could be claimed for creating heroical  
     lays,  
 Thou hast won it; if ever the laurel  
     divine  
 Crowned the Maker and Builder, that glory  
     is thine!

Thy songs are right epic, they tell how this  
     rude  
 Rock-rib of our earth here was tamed and  
     subdued;  
 Thou hast written them plain on the face  
     of the planet  
 In brave, deathless letters of iron and  
     granite;  
 Thou hast printed them deep for all time;  
     they are set  
 From the same runic type-fount and alpha-  
     bet<sup>560</sup>  
 With thy stout Berkshire hills and the  
     arms of thy Bay, —  
 They are staves from the burly old May-  
     flower lay.  
 If the drones of the Old World, in queru-  
     lous ease,  
 Ask thy Art and thy Letters, point proudly  
     to these,  
 Or, if they deny these are Letters and  
     Art,  
 Toil on with the same old invincible  
     heart;  
 Thou art rearing the pedestal broad-based  
     and grand  
 Whereon the fair shapes of the Artist shall  
     stand,  
 And creating, through labors undaunted  
     and long,  
 The theme for all Sculpture and Painting  
     and Song!<sup>570</sup>

'But my good mother Baystate wants no  
     praise of mine,  
 She learned from *her* mother a precept di-  
     vine  
 About something that butters no parsnips,  
     her *forte*  
 In another direction lies, work is her  
     sport  
 (Though she'll curtsey and set her cap  
     straight, that she will,  
 If you talk about Plymouth and red Bun-  
     ker's hill).  
 Dear, notable goodwife! by this time of  
     night,  
 Her hearth is swept neatly, her fire burning  
     bright,  
 And she sits in a chair (of home plan and  
     make) rocking,  
 Musing much, all the while, as she darns on  
     a stocking,<sup>580</sup>  
 Whether turkeys will come pretty high  
     next Thanksgiving,



Whether flour 'll be so dear, for, as sure  
 as she's living,  
 She will use rye-and-injun then, whether  
 the pig  
 By this time ain't got pretty tolerable  
 big,  
 And whether to sell it outright will be  
 best,  
 Or to smoke hams and shoulders and salt  
 down the rest, —  
 At this minute, she'd swop all my verses,  
 ah, cruel!  
 For the last patent stove that is saving of  
 fuel;  
 So I'll just let Apollo go on, for his  
 phiz  
 Shows I've kept him awaiting too long as  
 it is.' 590

'If our friend, there, who seems a re-  
 porter, is done  
 With his burst of emotion, why, I will go  
 on,'  
 Said Apollo; some smiled, and, indeed, I  
 must own  
 There was something sarcastic, perhaps, in  
 his tone: —

'There's Holmes, who is matchless  
 among you for wit;  
 A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from  
 which flit  
 The electrical tingles of hit after hit;  
 In long poems 't is painful sometimes, and  
 invites  
 A thought of the way the new Telegraph  
 writes,  
 Which pricks down its little sharp sentences  
 spitefully 600  
 As if you got more than you'd title to  
 rightfully,  
 And you find yourself hoping its wild father  
 Lightning  
 Would flame in for a second and give you a  
 fright'ning.  
 He has perfect sway of what I call a sham  
 metre,  
 But many admire it, the English pentame-  
 ter,  
 And Campbell, I think, wrote most com-  
 monly worse,  
 With less nerve, swing, and fire in the same  
 kind of verse,

Nor e'er achieved aught in t' so worthy of  
 praise  
 As the tribute of Holmes to the grand  
*Marseillaise*.  
 You went crazy last year over Bulwer's  
 New Timon; — 610  
 Why, if B., to the day of his dying, should  
 rhyme on,  
 Heaping verses on verses and tomes upon  
 tomes,  
 He could ne'er reach the best point and  
 vigor of Holmes.  
 His are just the fine hands, too, to weave  
 you a lyric  
 Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with  
 satiric  
 In a measure so kindly you doubt if the  
 toes  
 That are trodden upon are your own or  
 your foes'.

'There is Lowell, who's striving Par-  
 nassus to climb  
 With a whole bale of isms tied together  
 with rhyme,  
 He might get on alone, spite of brambles  
 and boulders, 620  
 But he can't with that bundle he has on his  
 shoulders,  
 The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh  
 reaching  
 Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing  
 and preaching;  
 His lyre has some chords that would ring  
 pretty well,  
 But he'd rather by half make a drum of  
 the shell,  
 And rattle away till he's old as Methusa-  
 lem,  
 At the head of a march to the last new  
 Jerusalem.'

. . . . .  
 Here Miranda came up and began, 'As  
 to that —'  
 Apollo at once seized his gloves, cane, and  
 hat,  
 And, seeing the place getting rapidly  
 cleared, 630  
 I too snatched my notes and forthwith  
 disappeared.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL<sup>1</sup>PRELUDE TO PART FIRST<sup>2</sup>

OVER his keys the musing organist,  
 Beginning doubtfully and far away,  
 First lets his fingers wander as they list,  
 And builds a bridge from Dreamland for  
 his lay:  
 Then, as the touch of his loved instrument  
 Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his  
 theme,  
 First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent  
 Along the wavering vista of his dream.  
 Not only around our infancy  
 Doth heaven with all its splendors lie;<sup>3</sup> 10  
 Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,  
 We Sinais climb and know it not.<sup>4</sup>

Over our manhood bend the skies;  
 Against our fallen and traitor lives  
 The great winds utter prophecies;  
 With our faint hearts the mountain  
 strives;  
 Its arms outstretched, the druid wood  
 Waits with its benedicite;

<sup>1</sup> According to the mythology of the Romancers, the San Greal, or Holy Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus partook of the Last Supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favorite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the Romance of King Arthur. Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems.

The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the following poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the supposed date of King Arthur's reign. (LOWELL.)

<sup>2</sup> Holmes begins a poem of welcome to Lowell on his return from England:—

This is your month, the month of 'perfect days.'

June was indeed Lowell's month. Not only in the famous passage of this 'Prelude,' but in 'Under the Willows' (originally called 'A June Idyl'), 'Al Fresco' (originally 'A Day in June'), 'Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line' of the *Biglow Papers*, and 'The Nightingale in the Study,' he has made it peculiarly his own.

<sup>3</sup> Heaven lies about us in our Infancy! (WORDSWORTH, in the fifth stanza of the 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality.')

<sup>4</sup> See Lowell's letter, of Sunday, September 3, 1848, to his friend C. F. Briggs.

And to our age's drowsy blood  
 Still shouts the inspiring sea. 20

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives  
 us;

The beggar is taxed for a corner to die  
 in,

The priest hath his fee who comes and  
 shrives us,

We bargain for the graves we lie in;  
 At the devil's booth are all things sold,  
 Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of  
 gold;

For a cap and bells our lives we pay,  
 Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's task-  
 ing:

'T is heaven alone that is given away,  
 'T is only God may be had for the ask-  
 ing; 30

No price is set on the lavish summer;  
 June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June?

Then, if ever, come perfect days;  
 Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,  
 And over it softly her warm ear lays;  
 Whether we look, or whether we listen,  
 We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;  
 Every clod feels a stir of might,

An instinct within it that reaches and  
 towers, 40

And, groping blindly above it for light,  
 Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;  
 The flush of life may well be seen

Thrilling back over hills and valleys;  
 The cowslip startles in meadows green,  
 The buttercup catches the sun in its  
 chalice,

And there's never a leaf nor a blade too  
 mean

To be some happy creature's palace;  
 The little bird sits at his door in the sun,  
 Atilt like a blossom among the leaves, 50  
 And lets his illumined being o'errun

With the deluge of summer it receives;  
 His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,  
 And the heart in her dumb breast flutters  
 and sings;

He sings to the wide world, and she to her  
 nest, —

In the nice ear of Nature which song is the  
 best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,  
 And whatever of life hath ebb'd away  
 Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,  
 Into every bare inlet and creek and  
 bay; 60  
 Now the heart is so full that a drop over-  
 fills it,  
 We are happy now because God wills it;  
 No matter how barren the past may have  
 been,  
 'T is enough for us now that the leaves are  
 green;  
 We sit in the warm shade and feel right  
 well  
 How the sap creeps up and the blossoms  
 swell;  
 We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help  
 knowing  
 That skies are clear and grass is grow-  
 ing;  
 The breeze comes whispering in our ear,  
 That dandelions are blossoming near, 70  
 That maize has sprouted, that streams  
 are flowing,  
 That the river is bluer than the sky,  
 That the robin is plastering his house hard  
 by;  
 And if the breeze kept the good news  
 back,  
 For other couriers we should not lack;  
 We could guess it all by yon heifer's  
 lowing, —  
 And hark ! how clear bold chanticleer,  
 Warmed with the new wine of the year,  
 Tells all in his lusty crowing !

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how; 80  
 Everything is happy now,  
 Everything is upward striving;  
 'T is as easy now for the heart to be  
 true  
 As for grass to be green or skies to be  
 blue, —  
 'T is the natural way of living:  
 Who knows whither the clouds have fled ?  
 In the unscarred heaven they leave no  
 wake;  
 And the eyes forget the tears they have  
 shed,  
 The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;  
 The soul partakes the season's youth, 90  
 And the sulphurous rifts of passion and  
 woe  
 Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,  
 Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.

What wonder if Sir Launfal now  
 Remembered the keeping of his vow ?

## PART FIRST

### I

'My golden spurs now bring to me,  
 And bring to me my richest mail,  
 For to-morrow I go over land and sea  
 In search of the Holy Grail;  
 Shall never a bed for me be spread, 100  
 Nor shall a pillow be under my head,  
 Till I begin my vow to keep;  
 Here on the rushes will I sleep,  
 And perchance there may come a vision  
 true  
 Ere day create the world anew.'  
 Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,  
 Slumber fell like a cloud on him,  
 And into his soul the vision flew.

### II

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,  
 In the pool drownd the cattle up to their  
 knees, 110  
 The little birds sang as if it were  
 The one day of summer in all the year,  
 And the very leaves seemed to sing on the  
 trees:  
 The castle alone in the landscape lay  
 Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray:  
 'T was the proudest hall in the North  
 Countree,  
 And never its gates might opened be,  
 Save to lord or lady of high degree;  
 Summer besieged it on every side,  
 But the churlish stone her assaults defied;  
 She could not scale the chilly wall, 121  
 Though around it for leagues her pavilions  
 tall  
 Stretched left and right,  
 Over the hills and out of sight;  
 Green and broad was every tent,  
 And out of each a murmur went  
 Till the breeze fell off at night.

### III

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,  
 And through the dark arch a charger sprang,  
 Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight, 130  
 In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright  
 It seemed the dark castle had gathered all  
 Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over  
 its wall

In his siege of three hundred summers  
long,  
And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,  
Had cast them forth: so, young and  
strong,  
And lightsome as a locust-leaf,  
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his maiden  
mail,  
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

## IV

It was morning on hill and stream and  
tree, 140  
And morning in the young knight's heart;  
Only the castle moodily  
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,  
And gloomed by itself apart;  
The season brimmed all other things up  
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

## V

As Sir Launfal 'made morn through the  
darksome gate,  
He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the  
same,  
Who begged with his hand and moaned as  
he sate;  
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;  
The sunshine went out of his soul with a  
thrill, 151  
The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan shrink  
and crawl,  
And midway its leap his heart stood still  
Like a frozen waterfall;  
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,  
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,  
And seemed the one blot on the summer  
morn, —  
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

## VI

The leper raised not the gold from the  
dust:  
'Better to me the poor man's crust, 160  
Better the blessing of the poor,  
Though I turn me empty from his door;  
That is no true alms which the hand can  
hold;  
He gives only the worthless gold  
Who gives from a sense of duty;  
But he who gives but a slender mite,  
And gives to that which is out of sight,  
That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty  
Which runs through all and doth all  
unite, —

The hand cannot clasp the whole of his  
alms, 170  
The heart outstretches its eager palms,  
For a god goes with it and makes it store  
To the soul that was starving in darkness  
before.'

PRELUDE TO PART SECOND<sup>1</sup>

Down swept the chill wind from the moun-  
tain peak,  
From the snow five thousand summers  
old;  
On open wold and hilltop bleak  
It had gathered all the cold,  
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's  
cheek;  
It carried a shiver everywhere  
From the unleaved boughs and pastures  
bare; 180  
The little brook heard it and built a roof  
'Neath which he could house him, winter-  
proof;  
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams  
He groined his arches and matched his  
beams;  
Slender and clear were his crystal spars  
As the lashes of light that trim the stars:  
He sculptured every summer delight  
In his halls and chambers out of sight;  
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt  
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,  
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed  
trees 191  
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;  
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew  
But silvery mosses that downward grew;  
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief  
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;  
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear  
For the gladness of heaven to shine  
through, and here

<sup>1</sup> Last night . . . I walked to Watertown over the snow with the new moon before me and a sky exactly like that in Page's evening landscape. Orion was rising behind me, and, as I stood on the hill just before you enter the village, the stillness of the fields around me was delicious, broken only by the tinkle of a little brook which runs too swiftly for Frost to catch it. My picture of the brook in *Sir Launfal* was drawn from it. But why do I send you this description — like the bones of a chicken I had picked? Simply because I was so happy as I stood there, and felt so sure of doing something that would justify my friends. (LOWELL, to Briggs, in a letter of December, 1848, just after the publication of *Sir Launfal*. Quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.)

He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops  
 And hung them thickly with diamond  
     drops, 200  
 That crystallised the beams of moon and  
     sun,  
 And made a star of every one:  
 No mortal builder's most rare device  
 Could match this winter-palace of ice;  
 'Twas as if every image that mirrored  
     lay  
 In his depths serene through the summer  
     day,  
 Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,  
     Lest the happy model should be lost,  
 Had been mimicked in fairy masonry  
     By the elfin builders of the frost. 210

Within the hall are song and laughter,  
     The cheeks of Christmas glow red and  
     jolly,  
 And sprouting is every corbel and rafter  
     With lightsome green of ivy and holly;  
 Through the deep gulf of the chimney  
     wide  
 Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;  
 The broad flame-pennons droop and flap  
     And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;  
 Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,  
     Hunted to death in its galleries blind; 220  
 And swift little troops of silent sparks,  
     Now pausing, now scattering away as in  
     fear,  
 Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks  
     Like herds of startled deer.

But the wind without was eager and sharp,  
 Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,  
     And rattles and wrings  
     The icy strings,  
     Singing, in dreary monotone,  
     A Christmas carol of its own, 230  
     Whose burden still, as he might guess,  
     Was 'Shelterless, shelterless, shelter-  
     less!'  
 The voice of the seneschal flared like a  
     torch  
 As he shouted the wanderer away from the  
     porch,  
 And he sat in the gateway and saw all  
     night  
     The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,  
     Through the window-slits of the castle  
     old,  
 Build out its piers of ruddy light  
 Against the drift of the cold.

## PART SECOND

## I

THERE was never a leaf on bush or tree,  
 The bare boughs rattled shudderingly; 241  
 The river was dumb and could not speak,  
     For the weaver Winter its shroud had  
     spun;  
 A single crow on the tree-top bleak  
     From his shining feathers shed off the  
     cold sun;  
 Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,  
 As if her veins were sapless and old,  
 And she rose up decrepitly  
 For a last dim look at earth and sea.

## II

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard  
     gate, 250  
 For another heir in his earldom sate;  
 An old, bent man, worn out and frail,  
 He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;  
 Little he recked of his earldom's loss,  
 No more on his surcoat was blazoned the  
     cross,  
 But deep in his soul the sign he wore,  
 The badge of the suffering and the poor.

## III

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare  
 Was idle mail 'gainst the barbèd air,  
 For it was just at the Christmas time; 260  
 So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,  
 And sought for a shelter from cold and  
     snow  
 In the light and warmth of long-ago;  
 He sees the snake-like caravan crawl  
 O'er the edge of the desert, black and  
     small,  
 Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,  
 He can count the camels in the sun,  
 As over the red-hot sands they pass  
 To where, in its slender necklace of grass,  
 The little spring laughed and leapt in the  
     shade, 270  
 And with its own self like an infant played,  
 And waved its signal of palms.

## IV

'For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms;'  
 The happy camels may reach the spring,  
 But Sir Launfal sees only the grewsome  
     thing,  
 The leper, lank as the rain-blanchèd bone,  
 That cowers beside him, a thing as lone

And white as the ice-isles of Northern  
seas  
In the desolate horror of his disease.

## V

And Sir Launfal said, 'I behold in thee 280  
An image of Him who died on the tree;  
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,  
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and  
scorns,  
And to thy life were not denied  
The wounds in the hands and feet and side:  
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;  
Behold, through him, I give to thee!'

## VI

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his  
eyes  
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straight-  
way he  
Remembered in what a haughtier guise 290  
He had flung an alms to leprosie,  
When he girt his young life up in gilded  
mail  
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.  
The heart within him was ashes and dust;  
He parted in twain his single crust,  
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,  
And gave the leper to eat and drink,  
'Twas a mouldy crust of coarse brown  
bread,  
'Twas water out of a wooden bowl, —  
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper  
fed, 300  
And 't was red wine he drank with his  
thirsty soul.

## VII

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast  
face,  
A light shone round about the place;  
The leper no longer crouched at his side,  
But stood before him glorified,  
Shining and tall and fair and straight  
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful  
Gate, —  
Himself the Gate whereby men can  
Enter the temple of God in Man.

## VIII

His words were shed softer than leaves  
from the pine, 310  
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on  
the brine,

That mingle their softness and quiet in  
one  
With the shaggy unrest they float down  
upon;  
And the voice that was softer than silence  
said,  
'Lo, it is I, be not afraid!  
In many climes, without avail,  
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy  
Grail;  
Behold, it is here, — this cup which thou  
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but  
now;  
This crust is my body broken for thee, 320  
This water his blood that died on the  
tree;  
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,  
In whatso we share with another's need;  
Not what we give, but what we share,  
For the gift without the giver is bare;  
Who gives himself with his alms feeds  
three,  
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.'

## IX

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swoond:  
'The Grail in my castle here is found!  
Hang my idle armor up on the wall, 330  
Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;  
He must be fenced with stronger mail  
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail.'

## X

The castle gate stands open now,  
And the wanderer is welcome to the  
hall  
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;  
No longer scowl the turrets tall,  
The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;  
When the first poor outcast went in at the  
door,  
She entered with him in disguise, 340  
And mastered the fortress by surprise;  
There is no spot she loves so well on  
ground,  
She lingers and smiles there the whole year  
round;  
The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land  
Has hall and bower at his command;  
And there's no poor man in the North  
Countree  
But is lord of the earldom as much as  
he.

1848.

1848.

BEAVER BROOK<sup>1</sup>

HUSHED with broad sunlight lies the hill,  
And, minuting the long day's loss,  
The cedar's shadow, slow and still,  
Creeps o'er its dial of gray moss.

Warm noon brims full the valley's cup,  
The aspen's leaves are scarce astir;  
Only the little mill sends up  
Its busy, never-ceasing burr.

Climbing the loose-piled wall that hems  
The road along the mill-pond's brink, 10  
From 'neath the arching barberry-stems,  
My footstep scares the shy chewink.

Beneath a bony buttonwood  
The mill's red door lets forth the din;  
The whitened miller, dust-imbued,  
Flits past the square of dark within.

No mountain torrent's strength is here;  
Sweet Beaver, child of forest still,  
Heaps its small pitcher to the ear,  
And gently waits the miller's will. 20

Swift slips Undine along the race  
Unheard, and then, with flashing bound,  
Floods the dull wheel with light and grace,  
And, laughing, hunts the loath drudge  
round.

The miller dreams not at what cost  
The quivering millstones hum and whirl,  
Nor how for every turn are tost  
Armfuls of diamond and of pearl.

But Summer cleared my happier eyes  
With drops of some celestial juice, 30  
To see how Beauty underlies  
Forevermore each form of use.

And more; methought I saw that flood,  
Which now so dull and darkling steals,  
Thick, here and there, with human blood,  
To turn the world's laborious wheels.

<sup>1</sup> The little mill stands in a valley between one of the spurs of Wellington Hill and the main summit, just on the edge of Waltham. It is surely one of the loveliest spots in the world. It is one of my lions, and if you will make me a visit this spring I will take you up to hear it roar, and I will show you 'the oaks'—the largest, I fancy, left in the country. (LOWELL, in a letter of January 5, 1849. Quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.)

The poem was originally called 'The Mill.'

No more than doth the miller there,  
Shut in our several cells, do we  
Know with what waste of beauty rare  
Moves every day's machinery. 4

Surely the wiser time shall come  
When this fine overplus of might,  
No longer sullen, slow, and dumb,  
Shall leap to music and to light.

In that new childhood of the Earth  
Life of itself shall dance and play,  
Fresh blood in Time's shrunk veins make  
mirth,  
And labor meet delight half-way.

1848.

1849.

## BIBLIOLATRES

Bowing thyself in dust before a Book,  
And thinking the great God is thine alone,  
O rash iconoclast, thou wilt not brook  
What gods the heathen carves in wood and  
stone,  
As if the Shepherd who from the outer  
cold  
Leads all his shivering lambs to one sure  
fold  
Were careful for the fashion of his crook.

There is no broken reed so poor and base,  
No rush, the bending tilt of swamp-fly  
blue,  
But He therewith the ravening wolf can  
chase, 10  
And guide his flock to springs and pastures  
new;  
Through ways unlooked for, and through  
many lands,  
Far from the rich folds built with human  
hands,  
The gracious footprints of his love I trace.

And what art thou, own brother of the clod,  
That from his hand the crook wouldst  
snatch away  
And shake instead thy dry and sapless rod,  
To scare the sheep out of the wholesome  
day?

Yea, what art thou, blind, unconverted  
Jew,  
That with thy idol-volume's covers two 20  
Wouldst make a jail to coop the living  
God?



**T**hou hear'st not well the mountain organ-  
tones  
**B**y prophet ears from Hor and Sinai caught,  
**T**hinking the cisterns of those Hebrew  
brains  
**D**rew dry the springs of the All-knower's  
thought,  
**N**or shall thy lips be touched with living  
fire,  
**W**ho blow'st old altar-coals with sole de-  
sire  
**T**o weld anew the spirit's broken chains.

**G**od is not dumb, that He should speak no  
more;  
If thou hast wanderings in the wilder-  
ness  
And find'st not Sinai, 't is thy soul is poor;  
There towers the Mountain of the Voice no  
less,  
Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who  
bends,  
Intent on manna still and mortal ends,  
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered  
lore.

Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,  
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of  
stone;  
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to  
it,  
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.  
While swings the sea, while mists the  
mountains shroud,  
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of  
cloud,  
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit.

1849.

THE FIRST SNOW-FALL<sup>1</sup>

**T**HE snow had begun in the gloaming,  
And busily all the night  
Had been heaping field and highway  
With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock  
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Changeling' and 'She came and went.' In sending this poem to the *Standard* Lowell wrote: 'Print that as if you loved it. Let not a comma be blundered. Especially I fear they will put *gleaming* for *gloaming* in the first line unless you look to it. May you never have the key which shall unlock the whole meaning of the poem to you!' (*Lowell's Letters*, Harper and Brothers, letter of December 22, 1849.)

And the poorest twig on the elm-tree  
Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara  
Came Chanticleer's muffled crow,  
The stiff rails softened to swan's-down,  
And still fluttered down the snow. 10

I stood and watched by the window  
The noiseless work of the sky,  
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,  
Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn  
Where a little headstone stood;  
How the flakes were folding it gently,  
As did robins the babes in the wood. 20

Up spoke our own little Mabel,  
Saying, 'Father, who makes it snow?'  
And I told of the good All-father  
Who cares for us here below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall,  
And thought of the leaden sky  
That arched o'er our first great sorrow,  
When that mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience  
That fell from that cloud like snow,  
Flake by flake, healing and hiding  
The scar that renewed our woe. 30

And again to the child I whispered,  
'The snow that husheth all,  
Darling, the merciful Father  
Alone can make it fall!'

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed  
her;

And she, kissing back, could not know  
That my kiss was given to her sister,  
Folded close under deepening snow. 40

1849.

1849.

## THE SINGING LEAVES

## A BALLAD

## I

'WHAT fairings will ye that I bring?'  
Said the King to his daughters three;  
'For I to Vanity Fair am boun,  
Now say what shall they be?'

Then up and spake the eldest daughter,  
That lady tall and grand:  
'Oh, bring me pearls and diamonds great,  
And gold rings for my hand.'

Thereafter spake the second daughter,  
That was both white and red: 10  
'For me bring silks that will stand alone,  
And a gold comb for my head.'

Then came the turn of the least daughter,  
That was whiter than thistle-down,  
And among the gold of her blithesome hair  
Dim shone the golden crown.

'There came a bird this morning,  
And sang 'neath my bower eaves,  
Till I dreamed, as his music made me,  
"Ask thou for the Singing Leaves."' 20

Then the brow of the King swelled crimson  
With a flush of angry scorn:  
'Well have ye spoken, my two eldest,  
And chosen as ye were born;

'But she, like a thing of peasant race,  
That is happy binding the sheaves;'  
Then he saw her dead mother in her  
face,  
And said, 'Thou shalt have thy leaves.'

## II

He mounted and rode three days and nights  
Till he came to Vanity Fair, 30  
And 't was easy to buy the gems and the  
silk,  
But no Singing Leaves were there.

Then deep in the greenwood rode he,  
And asked of every tree,  
'Oh, if you have ever a Singing Leaf,  
I pray you give it me!'

But the trees all kept their counsel,  
And never a word said they,  
Only there sighed from the pine-tops  
A music of seas far away. 40

Only the pattering aspen  
Made a sound of growing rain,  
That fell ever faster and faster,  
Then faltered to silence again.

'Oh, where shall I find a little foot-page  
That would win both hose and shoon,

And will bring to me the Singing Leaves  
If they grow under the moon?'

Then lightly turned him Walter the page, 50  
By the stirrup as he ran:  
'Now pledge you me the truesome word  
Of a king and gentleman,

'That you will give me the first, first thing  
You meet at your castle-gate,  
And the Princess shall get the Singing  
Leaves,  
Or mine be a traitor's fate.'

The King's head dropt upon his breast  
A moment, as it might be;  
'T will be my dog, he thought, and said,  
'My faith I plight to thee.' 60

Then Walter took from next his heart  
A packet small and thin,  
'Now give you this to the Princess Anne,  
The Singing Leaves are therein.'

## III

As the King rode in at his castle-gate,  
A maiden to meet him ran,  
And 'Welcome, father!' she laughed and  
cried  
Together, the Princess Anne.

'Lo, here the Singing Leaves,' quoth he,  
'And woe, but they cost me dear!' 70  
She took the packet, and the smile  
Deepened down beneath the tear.

It deepened down till it reached her heart,  
And then gushed up again,  
And lighted her tears as the sudden sun  
Transfigures the summer rain.

And the first Leaf, when it was opened,  
Sang: 'I am Walter the page,  
And the songs I sing 'neath thy window  
Are my only heritage.' 80

And the second Leaf sang: 'But in the  
land  
That is neither on earth nor sea,  
My lute and I are lords of more  
Than thrice this kingdom's fee.'

And the third Leaf sang, 'Be mine! Be  
mine!'  
And ever it sang, 'Be mine!'

Then sweeter it sang and ever sweeter,  
And said, 'I am thine, thine, thine!'

At the first Leaf she grew pale enough,  
At the second she turned aside, 90  
At the third, 't was as if a lily flushed  
With a rose's red heart's tide.

'Good counsel gave the bird,' said she,  
'I have my hope thrice o'er,  
For they sing to my very heart,' she said,  
'And it sings to them evermore.'

She brought to him her beauty and truth,  
But and broad earldoms three,  
And he made her queen of the broader lands  
He held of his lute in fee. 100

1854.

## WITHOUT AND WITHIN

My coachman, in the moonlight there,  
Looks through the side-light of the door;  
I hear him with his brethren swear,  
As I could do, — but only more.

Flattening his nose against the pane,  
He envies me my brilliant lot,  
Breathes on his aching fists in vain,  
And dooms me to a place more hot.

He sees me in to supper go,  
A silken wonder by my side, 10  
Bare arms, bare shoulders, and a row  
Of flounces, for the door too wide.

He thinks how happy is my arm  
'Neath its white-gloved and jewelled  
load;  
And wishes me some dreadful harm,  
Hearing the merry corks explode.

Meanwhile I inly curse the bore  
Of hunting still the same old coon,  
And envy him, outside the door,  
In golden quiets of the moon. 20

The winter wind is not so cold  
As the bright smile he sees me win,  
Nor the host's oldest wine so old  
As our poor gabble sour and thin.

I envy him the ungyved prance  
With which his freezing feet he warms,

And drag my lady's-chains and dance  
The galley-slave of dreary forms.

Oh, could he have my share of din,  
And I his quiet! — past a doubt 30  
'T would still be one man bored within,  
And just another bored without.

Nay, when, once paid my mortal fee,  
Some idler on my headstone grim  
Traces the moss-blurred name, will he  
Think me the happier, or I him?

1854.

AUF WIEDERSEHEN<sup>1</sup>

## SUMMER

THE little gate was reached at last,  
Half hid in lilacs down the lane;  
She pushed it wide, and, as she past,  
A wistful look she backward cast,  
And said, — '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

With hand on latch, a vision white  
Lingered reluctant, and again  
Half doubting if she did aright,  
Soft as the dew that fell that night,  
She said, — '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

The lamp's clear gleam flits up the  
stair;  
I linger in delicious pain;  
Ah, in that chamber, whose rich air  
To breathe in thought I scarcely dare,  
Thinks she, — '*Auf wiedersehen?*' . . .

'T is thirteen years; once more I press  
The turf that silences the lane;  
I hear the rustle of her dress,  
I smell the lilacs, and — ah, yes,  
I hear '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

Sweet piece of bashful maiden art!  
The English words had seemed too  
fain,  
But these — they drew us heart to heart,  
Yet held us tenderly apart;  
She said, '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

1854.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Lowell died October 27, 1853. See Longfellow's '*The Two Angels*,' Scudder's '*Life of Lowell*,' vol. 1, pp. 356-362, and '*The Poems of Maria White Lowell*.'

## PALINODE

## AUTUMN

STILL thirteen years: 't is autumn now  
On field and hill, in heart and brain;  
The naked trees at evening sough;  
The leaf to the forsaken bough  
Sighs not, — '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

Two watched yon oriole's pendent dome,  
That now is void, and dank with rain,  
And one, — oh, hope more frail than foam!  
The bird to his deserted home  
Sings not, — '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

The loath gate swings with rusty creak;  
Once, parting there, we played at pain;  
There came a parting, when the weak  
And fading lips essayed to speak  
Vainly, — '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

Somewhere is comfort, somewhere faith,  
Though thou in outer dark remain;  
One sweet sad voice ennobles death,  
And still, for eighteen centuries saith  
Softly, — '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

If earth another grave must bear,  
Yet heaven hath won a sweeter strain,  
And something whispers my despair,  
That, from an orient chamber there,  
Floats down, '*Auf wiedersehen!*'

1854.

THE WIND-HARP<sup>1</sup>

I TREASURE in secret some long, fine hair  
Of tenderest brown, but so inwardly  
golden  
I half used to fancy the sunshine there,  
So shy, so shifting, so waywardly rare,  
Was only caught for the moment and  
holden

<sup>1</sup> It is dreary enough sometimes, for a mountain-peak on whose snow your foot makes the first mortal print is not so lonely as a room full of happy faces from which one is missing forever. This was originally the fifth stanza of 'The Windharp: ' —

O tress! that so oft in my heart hast lain,  
Rocked to rest within rest by its thankful beating,  
Say, which is harder — to bear the pain  
Of laughter and light, or to wait in vain  
'Neath the unleaved tree the impossible meeting?  
If Death's lips be icy, Life gives, 'twis,  
Some kisses more clay-cold and darkening than his!  
(LOWELL, in a letter of December 7, 1854.)

While I could say *Dearest!* and kiss it,  
and then  
In pity let go to the summer again.

I twisted this magic in gossamer strings  
Over a wind-harp's Delphian hollow;  
Then called to the idle breeze that swings  
All day in the pine-tops, and clings, and  
sings  
'Mid the musical leaves, and said, 'Oh,  
follow  
The will of those tears that deepen my  
words,  
And fly to my window to waken these  
chords.'

So they trembled to life, and, doubtfully  
Feeling their way to my sense, sang,  
'Say whether  
They sit all day by the greenwood tree,  
The lover and loved, as it wont to be,  
When we — ' But grief conquered, and  
all together  
They swelled such weird murmur as haunts  
a shore  
Of some planet dispeopled, — '*Never-*  
*more!*'

Then from deep in the past, as seemed to  
me,  
The strings gathered sorrow and sang  
forsaken,  
'One lover still waits 'neath the green-  
wood tree,  
But 't is dark,' and they shuddered, 'where  
lieth she  
Dark and cold! Forever must one be  
taken?'  
But I groaned, 'O harp of all ruth bereft,  
This Scripture is sadder, — "the other  
left"!'

There murmured, as if one strove to speak,  
And tears came instead; then the sad  
tones wandered  
And faltered among the uncertain chords  
In a troubled doubt between sorrow and  
words;  
At last with themselves they questioned  
and pondered,  
'Hereafter? — who knoweth?' and so they  
sighed  
Down the long steps that lead to silence  
and died.

1854.

1854.

AFTER THE BURIAL<sup>1</sup>

YES, faith is a goodly anchor;

When skies are sweet as a psalm,  
At the bows it lolls so stalwart,  
In its bluff, broad-shouldered calm.

And when over breakers to leeward  
The tattered surges are hurled,  
It may keep our head to the tempest,  
With its grip on the base of the world.

But, after the shipwreck, tell me  
What help in its iron thews, 10  
Still true to the broken hawser,  
Deep down among sea-weed and ooze?

In the breaking gulfs of sorrow,  
When the helpless feet stretch out  
And find in the deeps of darkness  
No footing so solid as doubt,

Then better one spar of Memory,  
One broken plank of the Past,

<sup>1</sup> A threefold sorrow has here found for itself a single expression. Part of the poem was written in 1850, after the death of Lowell's third daughter, Rose, only six months and a half old. 'I shall never forget,' he said at this time, 'the feeling I had when little Blanche's coffin was brought into the house. It was refreshed again lately. But for Rose I would have no funeral. . . . She was a lovely child — we think the loveliest of our three. She was more like Blanche than Mabel. . . . Her illness lasted a week, but I never had any hope, so that she died to me the first day the doctor came. She was very beautiful — fair, with large dark-gray eyes and fine features. . . . Dear little child! she had never spoken, only smiled.' There follow, in Lowell's letter, six stanzas of this poem, in an earlier form. Into it is interwoven the memory of his oldest child, Blanche, especially perhaps in the last stanza. 'After Blanche was buried' says Scudder in his *Life of Lowell*, 'her father took her tiny shoes, the only ones she had ever worn, and hung them in his chamber. There they stayed till his own death.' But it was the death of Lowell's wife that gave to the poem its real intensity. The second to fourth stanzas, and the seventh to twelfth, were written in a mood which made Lowell say later: 'Something broke my life in two, and I cannot piece it together again. . . . I hope you may never have reason to like "After the Burial" better than you do.'

The same interweaving is found in 'Under the Willows,' of which Lowell says: 'Something more than half of it was written more than twenty years ago, on the death of our eldest daughter; but when I came to complete it, that other death, which broke my life in two, would come in against my will.'

Lowell said of this poem later, 'A living verse can only be made of a living experience — and that our own. One of my most personal poems, "After the Burial," has roused strange echoes in men who assured me they were generally insensible to poetry. After all, the only stuff a solitary man has to spin is himself.' (The extracts from *Lowell's Letters* are quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.)

That our human heart may cling to,  
Though hopeless of shore at last! 20

To the spirit its splendid conjectures,  
To the flesh its sweet despair,  
Its tears o'er the thin-worn locket  
With its anguish of deathless hair!

Immortal? I feel it and know it,  
Who doubts it of such as she?  
But that is the pang's very secret, —  
Immortal away from me.

There's a narrow ridge in the graveyard  
Would scarce stay a child in his race, 30  
But to me and my thought it is wider  
Than the star-sown vague of Space.

Your logic, my friend, is perfect,  
Your moral most drearily true;  
But, since the earth clashed on *her* coffin,  
I keep hearing that, and not you.

Console if you will, I can bear it;  
'T is a well-meant alms of breath;  
But not all the preaching since Adam  
Has made Death other than Death. 40

It is pagan; but wait till you feel it, —  
That jar of our earth, that dull shock  
When the ploughshare of deeper passion  
Tears down to our primitive rock.

Communion in spirit! Forgive me,  
But I, who am earthly and weak,  
Would give all my incomes from dream-  
land  
For a touch of her hand on my cheek.

That little shoe in the corner,  
So worn and wrinkled and brown, 50  
With its emptiness confutes you,  
And argues your wisdom down.  
1850, 1854, 1868. 1868.

## L'ENVOI

TO THE MUSE<sup>1</sup>

WHITHER? Albeit I follow fast,  
In all life's circuit I but find,

<sup>1</sup> Passed an hour with Lowell this morning. He read me a poem, 'The Muse,' — very beautiful. It reminded me of Emerson's 'Forerunners.' (Longfellow's *Journal*, May 3, 1855.)

Not where thou art, but where thou wast,  
 Sweet beckoner, more fleet than wind !  
 I haunt the pine-dark solitudes,  
 With soft brown silence carpeted,  
 And plot to snare thee in the woods:  
 Peace I o'ertake, but thou art fled !  
 I find the rock where thou didst rest,  
 The moss thy skimming foot hath prest; 10  
 All Nature with thy parting thrills,  
 Like branches after birds new-flown;  
 Thy passage hill and hollow fills  
 With hints of virtue not their own;  
 In dimples still the water slips  
 Where thou has dipt thy finger-tips;  
 Just, just beyond, forever burn  
 Gleams of a grace without return;  
 Upon thy shade I plant my foot,  
 And through my frame strange raptures  
 shoot; 20  
 All of thee but thyself I grasp;  
 I seem to fold thy luring shape,  
 And vague air to my bosom clasp,  
 Thou lithe, perpetual Escape !

One mask and then another drops,  
 And thou art secret as before:  
 Sometimes with flooded ear I list,  
 And hear thee, wondrous organist,  
 From mighty continental stops  
 A thunder of new music pour; 30  
 Through pipes of earth and air and stone  
 Thy inspiration deep is blown;  
 Through mountains, forests, open downs,  
 Lakes, railroads, prairies, states, and towns,  
 Thy gathering fugue goes rolling on  
 From Maine to utmost Oregon;  
 The factory-wheels in cadence hum,  
 From brawling parties concords come;  
 All this I hear, or seem to hear,  
 But when, enchanted, I draw near 40  
 To mate with words the various theme,  
 Life seems a whiff of kitchen steam,  
 History an organ-grinder's thrum,  
 For thou hast slipt from it and me  
 And all thine organ-pipes left dumb,  
 Most mutable Perversity !

Not weary yet, I still must seek,  
 And hope for luck next day, next week;  
 I go to see the great man ride,  
 Shiplike, the swelling human tide 50  
 That floods to bear him into port,  
 Trophied from Senate-hall and Court;  
 Thy magnetism, I feel it there,  
 Thy rhythmic presence fleet and rare,

Making the Mob a moment fine  
 With glimpses of their own Divine,  
 As in their demigod they see  
 Their cramped ideal soaring free;  
 'T was thou didst bear the fire about,  
 That, like the springing of a mine, 60  
 Sent up to heaven the street-long shout;  
 Full well I know that thou wast here,  
 It was thy breath that brushed my ear;  
 But vainly in the stress and whirl  
 I dive for thee, the moment's pearl.

Through every shape thou well canst run,  
 Proteus, 'twixt rise and set of sun,  
 Well pleased with logger-camps in Maine  
 As where Milan's pale Duomo lies  
 A stranded glacier on the plain, 70  
 Its peaks and pinnacles of ice  
 Melted in many a quaint device,  
 And sees, above the city's din,  
 Afar its silent Alpine kin:  
 I track thee over carpets deep  
 To wealth's and beauty's inmost keep;  
 Across the sand of bar-room floors  
 'Mid the stale reek of boosing boors;  
 Where browse the hay-field's fragrant  
 heats,  
 Or the flail-heart of Autumn beats; 80  
 I dog thee through the market's throngs  
 To where the sea with myriad tongues  
 Laps the green edges of the pier,  
 And the tall ships that eastward steer,  
 Curtsy their farewells to the town,  
 O'er the curved distance lessening down;  
 I follow allwhere for thy sake,  
 Touch thy robe's hem, but ne'er o'ertake,  
 Find where, scarce yet unmoving, lies,  
 Warm from thy limbs, thy last disguise; 90  
 But thou another shape hast donned,  
 And lurest still just, just beyond !

But here a voice, I know not whence,  
 Thrills clearly through my inward sense,  
 Saying: 'See where she sits at home  
 While thou in search of her dost roam !  
 All summer long her ancient wheel  
 Whirls humming by the open door,  
 Or, when the hickory's social zeal  
 Sets the wide chimney in a roar, 100  
 Close-nestled by the tinkling hearth,  
 It modulates the household mirth  
 With that sweet serious undertone  
 Of duty, music all her own;  
 Still as of old she sits and spins  
 Our hopes, our sorrows, and our sins;



With equal care she twines the fates  
 Of cottages and mighty states;  
 She spins the earth, the air, the sea,  
 The maiden's unschooled fancy free, 110  
 The boy's first love, the man's first grief,  
 The budding and the fall o' the leaf;  
 The piping west-wind's snowy care  
 For her their cloudy fleeces spare,  
 Or from the thorns of evil times  
 She can glean wool to twist her rhymes;  
 Morning and noon and eve supply  
 To her their fairest tints for dye,  
 But ever through her twirling thread  
 There spires one line of warmest red, 120  
 Tinged from the homestead's genial heart,  
 The stamp and warrant of her art;  
 With this Time's sickle she outwears,  
 And blunts the Sisters' baffled shears.

'Harass her not: thy heat and stir  
 But greater coyness breed in her;  
 Yet thou mayst find, ere Age's frost,  
 Thy long apprenticeship not lost,  
 Learning at last that Stygian Fate  
 Unbends to him that knows to wait. 130  
 The Muse is womanish, nor deigns  
 Her love to him that pules and plains;  
 With proud, averted face she stands  
 To him that wooes with empty hands.  
 Make thyself free of Manhood's guild;  
 Pull down thy barns and greater build;  
 The wood, the mountain, and the plain  
 Wave breast-deep with the poet's grain;  
 Pluck thou the sunset's fruit of gold,  
 Glean from the heavens and ocean old; 140  
 From fireside lone and trampling street  
 Let thy life garner daily wheat;  
 The epic of a man rehearse,  
 Be something better than thy verse;  
 Make thyself rich, and then the Muse  
 Shall court thy precious interviews,  
 Shall take thy head upon her knee,  
 And such enchantment lilt to thee,  
 That thou shalt hear the life-blood flow  
 From farthest stars to grass-blades low, 150  
 And find the Listener's science still  
 Transcends the Singer's deepest skill!'  
 1855? 1860.

### MASACCIO

IN THE BRANCACCI CHAPEL

HE came to Florence long ago,  
 And painted here these walls, that shone

For Raphael and for Angelo,  
 With secrets deeper than his own,  
 Then shrank into the dark again,  
 And died, we know not how or when.

The shadows deepened, and I turned  
 Half sadly from the fresco grand;  
 'And is this,' mused I, 'all ye earned,  
 High-vaulted brain and cunning hand, 10  
 That ye to greater men could teach  
 The skill yourselves could never reach?'

'And who were they,' I mused, 'that  
 wrought  
 Through pathless wilds, with labor long,  
 The highways of our daily thought?  
 Who reared those towers of earliest song  
 That lift us from the crowd to peace  
 Remote in sunny silences?'

Out clanged the Ave Mary bells,  
 And to my heart this message came: 20  
 Each clamorous throat among them tells  
 What strong-souled martyrs died in flame  
 To make it possible that thou  
 Shouldst here with brother sinners bow.

Thoughts that great hearts once broke for,  
 we  
 Breathe cheaply in the common air;  
 The dust we trample heedlessly  
 Throbbled once in saints and heroes rare,  
 Who perished, opening for their race  
 New pathways to the commonplace. 30

Henceforth, when rings the health to those  
 Who live in story and in song,  
 O nameless dead, that now repose  
 Safe in Oblivion's chambers strong,  
 One cup of recognition true  
 Shall silently be drained to you!

1856?

(1868.)

### THE ORIGIN OF DIDACTIC POETRY

WHEN wise Minerva still was young  
 And just the least romantic,  
 Soon after from Jove's head she flung  
 That preternatural antic,  
 'T is said, to keep from idleness  
 Or flirting, those twin curses,  
 She spent her leisure, more or less,  
 In writing po——, no, verses.



How nice they were ! to rhyme with *far*  
 A kind *star* did not tarry; 10  
 The metre, too, was regular  
 As schoolboy's dot and carry;  
 And full they were of pious plums,  
 So extra-super-moral, —  
 For sucking Virtue's tender gums  
 Most tooth-enticing coral.

A clean, fair copy she prepares,  
 Makes sure of moods and tenses,  
 With her own hand, — for prudence spares  
 A man-(or woman)-uensis; 20  
 Complete, and tied with ribbons proud,  
 She hinted soon how cosy a  
 Treat it would be to read them loud  
 After next day's Ambrosia.

The Gods thought not it would amuse  
 So much as Homer's Odyssees,  
 But could not very well refuse  
 The properest of Goddesses;  
 So all sat round in attitudes  
 Of various dejection, 30  
 As with a *hem!* the queen of prudes  
 Began her grave prelection.

At the first pause Zeus said, 'Well sung! —  
 I mean — ask Phœbus, — *he* knows.'  
 Says Phœbus, 'Zounds! a wolf's among  
 Admetus's merinos!  
 Fine! very fine! but I must go;  
 They stand in need of me there;  
 Excuse me!' snatched his stick, and so  
 Plunged down the gladdened ether. 40

With the next gap, Mars said, 'For me  
 Don't wait, — naught could be finer,  
 But I'm engaged at half past three, —  
 A fight in Asia Minor!  
 Then Venus lisped, 'I'm sorely tried,  
 These duty-calls are vip'rous;  
 But I *must* go; I have a bride  
 To see about in Cyprus.'

Then Bacchus, — 'I must say good-by,  
 Although my peace it jeopards; 50  
 I meet a man at four, to try  
 A well-broke pair of leopards.'  
 His words woke Hermes. 'Ah!' he said,  
 'I *so* love moral theses!'  
 Then winked at Hebe, who turned red,  
 And smoothed her apron's creases.

Just then Zeus snored, — the Eagle drew  
 His head the wing from under;

Zeus snored, — o'er startled Greece there  
 flew

The many-volumed thunder. 60  
 Some augurs counted nine, some, ten;  
 Some said 't was war, some, famine,  
 And all, that other-minded men  
 Would get a precious —.

Proud Pallas sighed, 'It will not do;  
 Against the Muse I've sinned, oh!'  
 And her torn rhymes sent flying through  
 Olympus's back window.  
 Then, packing up a peplus clean,  
 She took the shortest path thence, 70  
 And opened, with a mind serene,  
 A Sunday-school in Athens.

The verses? Some in ocean swilled,  
 Killed every fish that bit to 'em;  
 Some Galen caught, and, when distilled,  
 Found morphine the residuum;  
 But some that rotted on the earth  
 Sprang up again in copies,  
 And gave two strong narcotics birth,  
 Didactic verse and poppies. 80

Years after, when a poet asked  
 The Goddess's opinion,  
 As one whose soul its wings had tasked  
 In Art's clear-aired dominion,  
 'Discriminate,' she said, 'betimes;  
 The Muse is unforgiving;  
 Put all your beauty in your rhymes,  
 Your morals in your living.'

1857.<sup>1</sup>

## THE DEAD HOUSE<sup>2</sup>

HERE once my step was quickened,  
 Here beckoned the opening door,  
 And welcome thrilled from the threshold  
 To the foot it had known before.

<sup>1</sup> In the first number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, of which Lowell was editor.

<sup>2</sup> I have a notion that the inmates of a house should never be changed. When the first occupants go out it should be burned, and a stone set up with 'Sacred to the memory of a HOME' on it. Suppose the body were eternal, and that when one spirit went out another took the lease. How frightful the strange expression of the eyes would be! I fancy sometimes that the look in the eyes of a familiar house changes when aliens have come into it. For certainly a dwelling adapts itself to its occupants. The front door of a hospitable man opens easily and looks broad, and you can read Welcome! on every step that leads to it. (*Lowell's Letters*, vol. i, pp. 283, 284. Quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.)

For the first form of the poem, see Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. i, pp. 435-437.

A glow came forth to meet me  
 From the flame that laughed in the grate,  
 And shadows adance on the ceiling,  
 Danced blither with mine for a mate.

'I claim you, old friend,' yawned the arm-  
 chair,

'This corner, you know, is your seat;' 10  
 'Rest your slippers on me,' beamed the  
 fender,

'I brighten at touch of your feet.'

'We know the practised finger,'  
 Said the books, 'that seems like brain;'  
 And the shy page rustled the secret  
 It had kept till I came again.

Sang the pillow, 'My down once quivered  
 On nightingales' throats that flew  
 Through moonlit gardens of Hafiz  
 To gather quaint dreams for you.' 20

Ah me, where the Past sowed heart's-ease,  
 The Present plucks rue for us men!  
 I come back: that scar unhealing  
 Was not in the churchyard then.

But, I think, the house is unaltered,  
 I will go and beg to look  
 At the rooms that were once familiar  
 To my life as its bed to a brook.

Unaltered! Alas for the sameness  
 That makes the change but more! 30  
 'T is a dead man I see in the mirrors,  
 'T is his tread that chills the floor!

To learn such a simple lesson,  
 Need I go to Paris and Rome,  
 That the many make the household,  
 But only one the home?

'T was just a womanly presence,  
 An influence unexpressed,  
 But a rose she had worn, on my grave-sod  
 Were more than long life with the rest!

'T was a smile, 't was a garment's rustle, 41  
 'T was nothing that I can phrase,  
 But the whole dumb dwelling grew con-  
 scious,  
 And put on her looks and ways.

Were it mine I would close the shutters,  
 Like lids when the life is fled,

And the funeral fire should wind it,  
 This corpse of a home that is dead.

For it died that autumn morning  
 When she, its soul, was borne 50  
 To lie all dark on the hillside  
 That looks over woodland and corn.

1858.

1858.

## AT THE BURNS CENTENNIAL

JANUARY, 1859

### I

A HUNDRED years! they're quickly fled,  
 With all their joy and sorrow;  
 Their dead leaves shed upon the dead,  
 Their fresh ones sprung by morrow!  
 And still the patient seasons bring  
 Their change of sun and shadow;  
 New birds still sing with every spring,  
 New violets spot the meadow.

### II

A hundred years! and Nature's powers  
 No greater grown nor lessened! 10  
 They saw no flowers more sweet than  
 ours,  
 No fairer new moon's crescent.  
 Would she but treat us poets so,  
 So from our winter free us,  
 And set our slow old sap aflow  
 To sprout in fresh ideas!

### III

Alas, think I, what worth or parts  
 Have brought me here competing,  
 To speak what starts in myriad hearts  
 With Burns's memory beating! 20  
 Himself had loved a theme like this;  
 Must I be its entomber?  
 No pen save his but's sure to miss  
 Its pathos or its humor.

### IV

As I sat musing what to say,  
 And how my verse to number,  
 Some elf in play passed by that way,  
 And sank my lids in slumber;  
 And on my sleep a vision stole,  
 Which I will put in metre, 30  
 Of Burns's soul at the wicket-hole  
 Where sits the good Saint Peter.

## V

The saint, methought, had left his post  
 That day to Holy Willie,  
 Who swore, 'Each ghost that comes shall  
 toast  
 In brunstane, will he, nill he;  
 There's nane need hope with phrases  
 fine  
 Their score to wipe a sin frae;  
 I'll chalk a sign, to save their tryin', —  
 A hand (5) and "Vide infra!"' 40

## VI

Alas! no soil's too cold or dry  
 For spiritual small potatoes,  
 Scrimped natures, spry the trade to ply  
 Of *diaboli advocatus*;  
 Who lay bent pins in the penance-stool  
 Where Mercy plumps a cushion,  
 Who've just one rule for knave and fool,  
 It saves so much confusion!

## VII

So when Burns knocked, Will knit his  
 brows,  
 His window gap made scanter, 50  
 And said, 'Go rouse the other house;  
 We lodge no Tam O'Shanter!'  
 'We lodge!' laughed Burns. 'Now well  
 I see  
 Death cannot kill old nature;  
 No human flea but thinks that he  
 May speak for his Creator!

## VIII

'But, Willie, friend, don't turn me forth,  
 Auld Cloutie needs no gauger;  
 And if on earth I had small worth,  
 You've let in worse, I'se wager!' 60  
 'Na, nane has knockit at the yett  
 But found me hard as whunstane;  
 There's chances yet your bread to get  
 Wi Auld Nick, gaugin' brunstane.'

## IX

Meanwhile, the Unco' Guid had ta'en  
 Their place to watch the process,  
 Flattening in vain on many a pane  
 Their disembodied noses.  
 Remember, please, 't is all a dream;  
 One can't control the fancies 70  
 Through sleep that stream with wayward  
 gleam,  
 Like midnight's boreal dances.

## X

Old Willie's tone grew sharp's a knife:  
 'In primis, I indite ye,  
 For makin' strife wi' the water o' life,  
 And preferrin' *aqua vita*!'  
 Then roared a voice with lusty din,  
 Like a skipper's when 't is blowy,  
 'If *that* 's a sin, I'd ne'er got in,  
 As sure as my name 's Noah!' 80

## XI

Baulked, Willie turned another leaf, —  
 'There's many here have heard ye,  
 To the pain and grief o' true belief,  
 Say hard things o' the clergy!'  
 Then rang a clear tone over all, —  
 'One plea for him allow me:  
 I once heard call from o'er me, "Saul,  
 Why persecutest thou me?"'

## XII

To the next charge vexed Willie turned,  
 And, sighing, wiped his glasses: 90  
 'I'm much concerned to find ye yearned  
 O'er-warmly tow'rd the lasses!'  
 Here David sighed; poor Willie's face  
 Lost all its self-possession:  
 'I leave this case to God's own grace;  
 It baffles *my* discretion!'

## XIII

Then sudden glory round me broke,  
 And low melodious surges  
 Of wings whose stroke to splendor woke  
 Creation's farthest verges; 100  
 A cross stretched, ladder-like, secure  
 From earth to heaven's own portal,  
 Whereby God's poor, with footing sure,  
 Climbed up to peace immortal.

## XIV

I heard a voice serene and low  
 (With my heart I seemed to hear it)  
 Fall soft and slow as snow on snow,  
 Like grace of the heavenly spirit;  
 As sweet as over new-born son  
 The croon of new-made mother, 110  
 The voice begun, 'Sore tempted one!'  
 Then, pausing, sighed, 'Our brother!

## XV

'If not a sparrow fall, unless  
 The Father sees and knows it,  
 Think! recks He less his form express,  
 The soul his own deposit?

If only dear to Him the strong,  
That never trip nor wander,  
Where were the throng whose morning  
song  
Thrills his blue arches yonder? 120

## XVI

'Do souls alone clear-eyed, strong-kneed,  
To Him true service render,  
And they who need his hand to lead,  
Find they his heart untender?  
Through all your various ranks and fates  
He opens doors to duty,  
And he that waits there at your gates  
Was servant of his Beauty.

## XVII

'The Earth must richer sap secrete  
(Could ye in time but know it!), 130  
Must juice concrete with fiercer heat,  
Ere she can make her poet;  
Long generations go and come,  
At last she bears a singer,  
For ages dumb of senses numb  
The compensation-bringer!

## XVIII

'Her cheaper broods in palaces  
She raises under glasses,  
But souls like these, heav'n's hostages,  
Spring shelterless as grasses: 140  
They share Earth's blessing and her bane,  
The common sun and shower;  
What makes your pain to them is gain,  
Your weakness is their power.

## XIX

'These larger hearts must feel the rolls  
Of stormier-waved temptation;  
These star-wide souls between their poles  
Bear zones of tropic passion.  
He loved much! — that is gospel good,  
Howe'er the text you handle; 150  
From common wood the cross was hewed,  
By love turned priceless sandal.

## XX

'If scant his service at the kirk,  
He *paters* heard and *aves*  
From choirs that lurk in hedge and birk,  
From blackbird and from mavis;  
The cowering mouse, poor unroofed thing,  
In him found Mercy's angel;  
The daisy's ring brought every spring  
To him Love's fresh evangel! 160

## XXI

'Not he the threatening texts who deals  
Is highest 'mong the preachers,  
But he who feels the woes and weals  
Of all God's wandering creatures.  
He doth good work whose heart can find  
The spirit 'neath the letter;  
Who makes his kind of happier mind,  
Leaves wiser men and better.

## XXII

'They make Religion be abhorred  
Who round with darkness gulf her, 170  
And think no word can please the Lord  
Unless it smell of sulphur.  
Dear Poet-heart, that childlike guessed  
The Father's loving kindness,  
Come now to rest! Thou didst his hest,  
If haply 't was in blindness!'

## XXIII

Then leapt heaven's portals wide apart,  
And at their golden thunder  
With sudden start I woke, my heart  
Still throbbing-full of wonder. 180  
'Father,' I said, 't is known to Thee  
How Thou thy Saints preparest;  
But this I see, — Saint Charity  
Is still the first and fairest!'

## XXIV

Dear Bard and Brother! let who may  
Against thy faults be railing  
(Though far, I pray, from us be they  
That never had a failing!),  
One toast I'll give, and that not long,  
Which thou wouldst pledge if present, —  
To him whose song, in nature strong, 191  
Makes man of prince and peasant!

1859?

THE WASHERS OF THE  
SHROUD<sup>1</sup>

OCTOBER, 1861

ALONG a river-side, I know not where,  
I walked one night in mystery of dream;

<sup>1</sup> Lowell wrote to Professor Charles Elliot Norton, October 12, 1861: 'I had just two days allowed me by Fields for the November *Atlantic*, and I got it done. It had been in my head some time, and when you see it you will remember my having spoken to you about it. Indeed, I owe it to you, for the hint came from one of those books of Souvestre's you lent me — the Breton legends. The writing took hold of me enough to leave

A chill creeps curdling yet beneath my  
hair,  
To think what chanced me by the pallid  
gleam  
Of a moon-wraith that waned through  
haunted air.

Pale fireflies pulsed within the meadow-  
mist  
Their halos, wavering thistle downs of  
light;  
The loon, that seemed to mock some goblin  
tryst,  
Laughed; and the echoes, huddling in af-  
fright,  
Like Odin's hounds, fled baying down the  
night. 10

Then all was silent, till there smote my  
ear  
A movement in the stream that checked  
my breath:  
Was it the slow splash of a wading deer?  
But something said, 'This water is of  
Death!  
The Sisters wash a shroud, — ill thing to  
hear!'

I, looking then, beheld the ancient Three  
Known to the Greek's and to the North-  
man's creed,  
That sit in shadow of the mystic Tree,  
Still crooning, as they weave their endless  
brede,  
One song: 'Time was, Time is, and Time  
shall be.' 20

No wrinkled crones were they, as I had  
deemed,  
But fair as yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,  
To mourner, lover, poet, ever seemed;  
Something too high for joy, too deep for  
sorrow,  
Thrilled in their tones, and from their  
faces gleamed.

me tired out and to satisfy me entirely as to what was the original of my head and back pains. But whether it is good or not, I am not yet far enough off to say. But *do* like it, if you can. Fields says it is "splendid," with tears in his eyes — but then I read it to him, which is half the battle. I began it as a lyric, but it *would* be too aphoristic for that, and finally flatly refused to sing at any price. So I submitted, took to pentameters, and only hope the thoughts are good enough to be preserved in the ice of the colder and almost glacier-slow measure. I think I have done well — in some stanzas at least — and not wasted words. It is about present matters.' (*Lowell's Letters*, vol. 1, p. 318. Quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.)

'Still men and nations reap as they have  
strawn,'  
So sang they, working at their task the  
while;  
'The fatal raiment must be cleansed ere  
dawn:  
For Austria? Italy? the Sea-Queen's  
isle?  
O'er what quenched grandeur must our  
shroud be drawn? 30

'Or is it for a younger, fairer corse,  
That gathered States like children round  
his knees,  
That tamed the wave to be his posting  
horse,  
Feller of forests, linker of the seas,  
Bridge-builder, hammerer, youngest son of  
Thor's?

'What make we, murmur'st thou? and  
what are we?  
When empires must be wound, we bring  
the shroud,  
The time-old web of the implacable Three:  
Is it too coarse for him, the young and  
proud?  
Earth's mightiest deigned to wear it, —  
why not he?' 40

'Is there no hope?' I moaned, 'so strong,  
so fair!  
Our Fowler whose proud bird would brook  
erewhile  
No rival's swoop in all our western air!  
Gather the ravens, then, in funeral file  
For him, life's morn yet golden in his hair?

'Leave me not hopeless, ye unpitied  
dames!  
I see, half seeing. Tell me, ye who scanned  
The stars, Earth's elders, still must noblest  
aims  
Be traced upon oblivious ocean-sands?  
Must Hesper join the wailing ghosts of  
names?' 50

'When grass-blades stiffen with red battle-  
dew,  
Ye deem we choose the victor and the slain:  
Say, choose we them that shall be leal and  
true  
To the heart's longing, the high faith of  
brain?  
Yet there the victory lies, if ye but knew.

'Three roots bear up Dominion: Know-  
ledge, Will, —  
These twain are strong, but stronger yet  
the third, —  
Obedience, — 't is the great tap-root that  
still,  
Knit round the rock of Duty, is not stirred,  
Though Heaven-loosed tempests spend their  
utmost skill. 60

'Is the doom sealed for Hesper? 'T is not  
we  
Denounce it, but the Law before all time:  
The brave makes danger opportunity;  
The waverer, paltering with the chance sub-  
lime,  
Dwarfs it to peril: which shall Hesper be?

'Hath he let vultures climb his eagle's  
seat  
To make Jove's bolts purveyors of their  
maw?  
Hath he the Many's plaudits found more  
sweet  
Than Wisdom? held Opinion's wind for  
Law?  
Then let him hearken for the doomster's  
feet! 70

'Rough are the steps, slow-hewn in flintiest  
rock,  
States climb to power by; slippery those  
with gold  
Down which they stumble to eternal mock:  
No chafferer's hand shall long the sceptre  
hold,  
Who, given a Fate to shape, would sell the  
block.

'We sing old Sagas, songs of weal and  
woe,  
Mystic because too cheaply understood;  
Dark sayings are not ours; men hear and  
know,  
See Evil weak, see strength alone in Good,  
Yet hope to stem God's fire with walls of  
tow. 80

'Time Was unlocks the riddle of Time  
Is,  
That offers choice of glory or of gloom;  
The solver makes Time Shall Be surely  
his.

But hasten, Sisters! for even now the tomb  
Grates its slow hinge and calls from the  
abyss.'

'But not for him,' I cried, 'not yet for  
him,  
Whose large horizon, westering, star by  
star  
Wins from the void to where on Ocean's  
rim  
The sunset shuts the world with golden  
bar,  
Not yet his thews shall fail, his eye grow  
dim! 90

'His shall be larger manhood, saved for  
those  
That walk unblenching through the trial-  
fires;  
Not suffering, but faint heart, is worst of  
woes,  
And he no base-born son of craven sires,  
Whose eye need blench confronted with his  
foes.

'Tears may be ours, but proud, for those  
who win  
Death's royal purple in the foeman's lines;  
Peace, too, brings tears; and 'mid the battle-  
din,  
The wiser ear some text of God divines,  
For the sheathed blade may rust with  
darker sin. 100

'God, give us peace! not such as lulls to  
sleep,  
But sword on thigh, and brow with purpose  
knit!  
And let our Ship of State to harbor sweep,  
Her ports all up, her battle-lanterns lit,  
And her leashed thunders gathering for  
their leap!'

So cried I with clenched hands and passion-  
ate pain,  
Thinking of dear ones by Potomac's side;  
Again the loon laughed mocking, and  
again  
The echoes bayed far down the night and  
died,  
While waking I recalled my wandering  
brain. 110

1861.

1861.

## THE BIGLOW PAPERS

## SECOND SERIES

THE COURTIN'<sup>1</sup>

GOD makes sech nights, all white an' still  
 Fur 'z you can look or listen,  
 Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,  
 All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown  
 An' peeked in thru' the winder,  
 An' there sot Huldry all alone,  
 'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side  
 With half a cord o' wood in — 10  
 There war n't no stoves (tell comfort died)  
 To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out  
 Towards the pootiest, bless her,  
 An' leetle flames danced all about  
 The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,  
 An' in amongst 'em rusted  
 The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young  
 Fetched back f'om Concord busted. 20

The very room, coz she was in,  
 Seemed warm f'om floor to 'ceilin',  
 An' she looked full ez rosy agin  
 Ez the apples she was peelin'.

<sup>1</sup> The only attempt I had ever made at anything like a pastoral (if that may be called an attempt which was the result almost of pure accident) was in 'The Courtin'.' While the Introduction to the First Series was going through the press, I received word from the printer that there was a blank page left which must be filled. I sat down at once and improvised another fictitious 'notice of the press,' in which, because verse would fill up space more cheaply than prose, I inserted an extract from a supposed ballad of Mr. Biglow. I kept no copy of it, and the printer, as directed, cut it off when the gap was filled. Presently I began to receive letters asking for the rest of it, sometimes for the balance of it. I had none, but to answer such demands, I patched a conclusion upon it in a later edition. Those who had only the first continued to importune me. Afterward, being asked to write it out as an autograph for the Baltimore Sanitary Commission Fair, I added other verses, into some of which I infused a little more sentiment in a homely way, and after a fashion completed it by sketching in the characters and making a connected story. Most likely I have spoiled it, but I shall put it at the end of this Introduction, to answer once for all those kindly importunings. (LOWELL, in the 'Introduction' to the *Biglow Papers*, 1836.)

'T was kin' o' kingdom-come to look  
 On sech a blessed cretur,  
 A dogrose blushin' to a brook  
 Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,  
 Clear grit an' human natur', 30  
 None could n't quicker pitch a ton  
 Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He 'd sparked it with full twenty gals,  
 Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,  
 Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells —  
 All is, he could n't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run  
 All crinkly like curled maple,  
 The side she breshed felt full o' sun  
 Ez a south slope in Ap'il. 40

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing  
 Ez hisn in the choir;  
 My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,  
 She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she 'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,  
 When her new meetin'-bunnet  
 Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair  
 O' blue eyes sot upun it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some*! 50  
 She seemed to 've gut a new soul,  
 For she felt sartin-sure he 'd come,  
 Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,  
 A-raspin' on the scraper, —  
 All ways to once her feelins flew  
 Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
 Some doubtfe o' the sekle,  
 His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,  
 But hern went pity Zekle. 60

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk  
 Ez though she wished him funder,  
 An' on her apples kep' to work,  
 Parin' away like murder.



' You want to see my Pa, I s'pose ?'  
 ' Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin' —  
 ' To see my Ma ? She's sprinklin' clo'es  
 Agin to-morrer's i'nin'.

To say why gals acts so or so,  
 Or don't, 'ould be persumin'; 70  
 Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*  
 Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,  
 Then stood a spell on t' other,  
 An' on which one he felt the wust  
 He could n't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, 'I'd better call agin;'  
 Says she, 'Think likely, Mister:'  
 Thet last word pricked him like a pin,  
 An' . . . Wal, he up an' kist her. 80

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,  
 Huldy sot pale ez ashes,  
 All kin' o' smily roun' the lips  
 An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind  
 Whose naturs never vary,  
 Like streams that keep a summer mind  
 Snowhid in Jenocary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued  
 Too tight for all expressin', 90  
 Tell mother see how metters stood,  
 An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide  
 Down to the Bay o' Fundy,  
 An' all I know is they was cried  
 In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

1848, 9, 1866.

1848, 1866.

## No. II

### MASON AND SLIDELL: A YAN- KEE IDYLL<sup>1</sup>

I LOVE to start out arter night's begun,  
 An' all the chores about the farm are done,

<sup>1</sup> In the latter part of 1861 President Davis undertook to send agents or commissioners to England and France to represent the Southern cause. The men chosen were James M. Mason, of Virginia, and John Slidell, of Louisiana. On the 12th of October they left Charleston, eluded the blockading squadron, and landed at Havana. Thence they embarked for St. Thomas on

The critters milked an' foddered, gates  
 shet fast,

Tools cleaned agin to-morrer, supper  
 past,

An' Nancy darnin' by her ker'sene lamp, —  
 I love, I say, to start upon a tramp,  
 To shake the kinkles out o' back an' legs,  
 An' kind o' rack my life off from the dregs  
 Thet's apt to settle in the buttery-hutch  
 Of folks thet foller in one rut too much: 10  
 Hard work is good an' wholesome, past all  
 doubt;

But 't ain't so, ef the mind gits tuckered  
 out.

Now, bein' born in Middlesex, you know,  
 There's certin spots where I like best to  
 go:

The Concord road, for instance (I, for one,  
 Most gin'lly ollers call it *John Bull's Run*),  
 The field o' Lexin'ton where England tried  
 The fastest colours thet she ever dyed,  
 An' Concord Bridge, thet Davis, when he  
 came,

Found was the bee-line track to heaven an'  
 fame, 20

Ez all roads be by natur', ef your soul  
 Don't sneak thru shun-pikes so's to save  
 the toll.

They're 'most too fur away, take too much  
 time

To visit of'en, ef it ain't in rhyme;  
 But the' 's a walk thet 's hendier, a sight,  
 An' suits me fust-rate of a winter's night, —

the British mail-steamer *Trent*. On the way the *Trent* was stopped by Captain Wilkes, of the American man-of-war *San Jacinto*, and the Confederate agents were transferred as prisoners to the latter vessel. The British Government at once proclaimed the act 'a great outrage,' and sent a peremptory demand for the release of the prisoners and reparation. At the same time, without waiting for any explanation, it made extensive preparations for hostilities. It seemed and undoubtedly was expedient for the United States to receive Lord Russell's demand as an admission that impressment of British seamen found on board neutral vessels was unwarrantable. Acting on the demand as an admission of the principle so long contended for by the United States, Mr. Seward disavowed the act of Wilkes and released the commissioners. But it was held then and has since been stoutly maintained by many jurists that the true principles of international law will not justify a neutral vessel in transporting the agents of a belligerent on a hostile mission. On the analogy of despatches they should be contraband. The difficulty of amicable settlement at that time, however, lay not so much in the point of law as in the intensity of popular feeling on both sides of the Atlantic. (F. B. Williams, in the *Riverside* and *Cambridge Editions* of Lowell's *Poetical Works*.) See also the long introductory letter of the Rev. Homer Wilbur, in the *Cambridge Edition*, pp. 228-233, and the *Riverside Edition*, vol. ii, pp. 240-253.

I mean the round whale's-back o' Prospect Hill.

I love to l'iter there while night grows still,

An' in the twinklin' villages about,  
Fust here, then there, the well-saved lights  
goes out,

An' nary sound but watch-dogs' false  
alarms,

Or muffled cock-crows from the drowsy  
farms,

Where some wise rooster (men act jest  
thet way)

Stands to 't thet moon-rise is the break o'  
day

(So Mister Seward sticks a three-months'  
pin

Where the war 'd oughto eend, then tries  
agin;

My gran'ther's rule was safer 'n 't is to  
crow:

*Don't never prophesy — unless ye know).*

I love to muse there till it kind o' seems  
Ez ef the world went eddyin' off in  
dreams;

The northwest wind thet twitches at my  
baird

Blows out o' sturdier days not easy scared,  
An' the same moon thet this December  
shines

Starts out the tents an' booths o' Putnam's  
lines;

The rail-fence posts, acrost the hill thet  
runs,

Turn ghosts o' sogers should'rin' ghosts o'  
guns;

Ez wheels the sentry, glints a flash o' light,  
Along the firelock won at Concord Fight,

An', 'twixt the silences, now fur, now nigh,  
Rings the sharp challenge, hums the low  
reply.

Ez I was settin' so, it warn't long sence,  
Mixin' the puffet with the present tense,  
I heerd two voices som'ers in the air,  
Though, ef I was to die, I can't tell where:  
Voices I call 'em: 't was a kind o' songh  
Like pine-trees thet the wind's ageth'rin  
through;

An', fact, I thought it *was* the wind a spell,  
Then some misdoubted, could n't fairly tell,  
Fust sure, then not, jest as you hold an eel,  
I knowed, an' did n't, — fin'ly seemed to  
feel

'T was Concord Bridge a talkin' off to kill

With the Stone Spike thet 's druv thru  
Bunker's Hill;

Whether 't was so, or ef I on'y dreamed,  
I could n't say; I tell it ez it seemed.

#### THE BRIDGE

Wal, neighbor, tell us wut's turned up  
thet's new?

You're younger 'n I be, — nigher Boston,  
tu:

An' down to Boston, ef you take their  
showin',

Wut they don't know ain't hardly wuth the  
knowin'.

There's *sunthin'* goin' on, I know: las'  
night

The British sogers killed in our gret fight,<sup>70</sup>  
(Nigh fifty year they hed n't stirred nor  
spoke)

Made sech a coil you 'd thought a dam hed  
broke:

Why, one he up an' beat a revellee  
With his own crossbones on a holler tree,  
Till all the graveyards swarmed out like a  
hive

With faces I hain't seen sence Seventy-  
five.

Wut is the news? 'T ain't good, or they'd  
be cheerin'.

Speak slow an' clear, for I'm some hard o'  
hearin'.

#### THE MONIMENT

I don't know hardly ef it's good or bad, —

#### THE BRIDGE

At wust, it can't be wus than wut we've  
had.

#### THE MONIMENT

You know them envys thet the Rebbles  
sent,

An' Cap'n Wilkes he borried o' the Trent?

#### THE BRIDGE

Wut! they ha'n't hanged 'em? Then their  
wits is gone!

Thet's the sure way to make a goose a  
swan!

#### THE MONIMENT

No: England she *would* hev 'em, *Fee, Fax,*  
*Fum!*

(Ez though she hed n't fools enough to  
home),

So they've returned 'em —

## THE BRIDGE

Hev they? Wal, by heaven,  
Thet's the wust news I've heerd sence  
Seventy-seven!  
By George, I meant to say, though I declare  
It's 'most enough to make a deacon swear.

## THE MONIMENT

Now don't go off half-cock: folks never  
gains 91  
By usin' pepper-sarse instid o' brains.  
Come, neighbor, you don't understan' —

## THE BRIDGE

How? Hey?  
Not understan'? Why, wut's to hender,  
pray?  
Must I go huntin' round to find a chap  
To tell me when my face hez hed a slap?

## THE MONIMENT

See here: the British they found out a flaw  
In Cap'n Wilkes's readin' o' the law  
(They *make* all laws, you know, an' so, o'  
course,  
It's nateral they should understan' their  
force): 100  
He 'd oughto ha' took the vessel into port,  
An' hed her sot on by a reg'lar court;  
She was a mail-ship, an' a steamer, tu,  
An' thet, they say, hez changed the pint o'  
view,  
Coz the old practice, bein' meant for sails,  
Ef tried upon a steamer, kind o' fails;  
You *may* take out despatches, but you  
mus' n't  
Take nary man —

## THE BRIDGE

You mean to say, you dus' n't!  
Changed pint o' view! No, no, — it's  
overboard  
With law an' gospel, when their ox is  
gored! 110  
I tell ye, England's law, on sea an' land,  
Hez ollers ben, '*I've gut the heaviest hand.*'  
Take nary man? Fine preachin' from her  
lips!  
Why, she hez taken hunderds from our  
ships,  
An' would agin, an' swear she had a right to,  
Ef we warn't strong enough to be perlite to.  
Of all the sarse thet I can call to mind,  
England *doos* make the most onpleasant  
kind:

It's you're the sinner ollers, she's the  
saint;  
Wut's good's all English, all thet is n't  
ain't; 120  
Wut profits her is ollers right an' just,  
An' ef you don't read Scriptur so, you  
must;  
She's praised herself ontill she fairly thinks  
There ain't no light in Natur when she  
winks;  
Hain't she the Ten Comman'ments in her  
pus?  
Could the world stir 'thout she went, tu,  
ez nus?  
She ain't like other mortals, thet's a fact:  
She never stopped the habus-corpus act,  
Nor specie payments, nor she never yet  
Cut down the int'rest on her public debt; 130  
She don't put down rebellions, lets 'em  
breed,  
An' 's ollers willin' Ireland should secede;  
She's all thet's honest, honnable, an' fair,  
An' when the vartoots died they made her  
heir.

## THE MONIMENT

Wal, wal, two wrongs don't never make a  
right;  
Ef we're mistaken, own up, an' don't  
fight:  
For gracious' sake, ha'n't we enough to du  
'thout gettin' up a fight with England, tu?  
She thinks we're rabble-rid —

## THE BRIDGE

An' so we can't  
Distinguish 'twixt You oughtn't an' You  
sha'n't! 140  
She judges by herself; she's no idear  
How 't stiddies folks to give 'em their fair  
sheer:  
The odds 'twixt her an' us is plain 's a  
steeple, —  
Her People's turned to Mob, our Mob's  
turned People.

## THE MONIMENT

She's riled jes' now —

## THE BRIDGE

Plain proof her cause ain't strong, —  
The one thet fust gits mad 's 'most ollers  
wrong.  
Why, sence she helped in lickin' Nap the  
Fust  
An' pricked a bubble jest agoin' to bust,

With Rooshy, Prooshy, Austy, all assistin',  
 Th' ain't nut a face but wut she 's shook  
     her fist in, 150  
 Ez though she done it all, an' ten times  
     more,  
 An' nothin' never hed gut done afore,  
 Nor never could agin, 'thout she wuz spliced  
 On to one eend an' gin th' old airth a hoist.  
 She is some punkins, thet I wun't deny  
 (For ain't she some related to you 'n' I?),  
 But there 's a few small intrists here be-  
     low  
 Outside the counter o' John Bull an' Co,  
 An' though they can't conceit how 't  
     should be so,  
 I guess the Lord druv down Creation's  
     spiles 160  
 'thout no *gret* helpin' from the British Isles,  
 An' could contrive to keep things pooty  
     stiff  
 Ef they withdrewed from 'business in a  
     miff;  
 I ha'n't no patience with sech swellin' fel-  
     lers ez  
 Think God can't forge 'thout them to blow  
     the bellerses.

## THE MONIMENT

You 're ollers quick to set your back aridge,  
 Though 't suits a tom-cat more 'n a sober  
     bridge:  
 Don't you git het: they thought the thing  
     was planned;  
 They 'll cool off when they come to under-  
     stand.

## THE BRIDGE

Ef *thet's* wut you expect, you 'll *hev* to  
     wait; 170  
 Folks never understand the folks they hate:  
 She 'll fin' some other grievance jest ez  
     good,  
 'fore the month 's out, to git misunderstood.  
 England cool off! She 'll do it, ef she sees  
 She 's run her head into a swarm o' bees.  
 I ain't so prejudiced ez wut you spose:  
 I hev thought England was the best thet  
     goes;  
 Remember (no, you can't), when *I* was  
     reared,  
*God save the King* was all the tune you  
     heerd:  
 But it 's enough to turn Wachuset roun' 180  
 This stumpin' fellers when you think  
     they 're down.

## THE MONIMENT

But, neighbor, ef they prove their claim at  
     law,  
 The best way is to settle, an' not jaw.  
 An' don't le' 's mutter 'bout the awfle bricks  
 We 'll give 'em, ef we ketch 'em in a  
     fix:  
 That 'ere 's most frequently the kin' o' talk  
 Of critters can't be kicked to toe the chalk;  
 Your 'You 'll see *nex* time!' an' 'Look  
     out bumby!'  
 'Most ollers ends in eatin' umble-pie.  
 'T wun't pay to scringe to England: will  
     it pay 190  
 To fear thet meaner bully, old 'They 'll  
     say'?  
 Suppose they *du* say: words are dreffle  
     bores,  
 But they ain't quite so bad ez seventy-fours.  
 Wut England wants is jest a wedge to fit  
 Where it 'll help to widen out our split:  
 She 's found her wedge, an' 't ain't for us  
     to come  
 An' lend the beetle thet 's to drive it home.  
 For growed-up folks like us 't would be a  
     scandle,  
 When we git sarsed, to fly right off the  
     handle.  
 England ain't *all* bad, coz she thinks us  
     blind: 200  
 Ef she can't change her skin, she can her  
     mind;  
 An' we shall see her change it double-quick,  
 Soon ez we 've proved thet we 're a-goin'  
     to lick.  
 She an' Columby 's gut to be fas' friends:  
 For the world prospers by their privit  
     ends:  
 'T would put the clock back all o' fifty  
     years  
 Ef they should fall together by the ears.

## THE BRIDGE

I 'gree to thet; she 's nigh us to wut France  
     is;  
 But then she 'll hev to make the fust ad-  
     vances;  
 We 've gut pride, tu, an' gut it by good  
     rights, 210  
 An' ketch *me* stoopin' to pick up the mites  
 O' condescension she 'll be lettin' fall  
 When she finds out we ain't dead arter all!  
 I tell ye wut, it takes more 'n one good  
     week  
 Afore *my* nose forgits it 's hed a tweak.

## THE MONIMENT

She 'll come out right bumbly, thet I 'll  
engage,  
Soon ez she gits to seein' we 're of age;  
This talkin' down o' hers ain't wuth a fuss;  
It 's nat'ral ez nut likin' 't is to us; 219  
Ef we 're agoin' to prove we *be* growed-up,  
'T wun't be by barkin' like a tarrier pup,  
But turnin' to an' makin' things ez good  
Ez wut we 're ollers braggin' that we could;  
We 're boun' to be good friends, an' so  
we 'd oughto,  
In spite of all the fools both sides the water.

## THE BRIDGE

I b'lieve thet's so; but harken in your  
ear,—  
I 'm older 'n you,—Peace wun't keep house  
with Fear:  
Ef you want peace, the thing you 've gut tu  
du  
Is jes' to show you 're up to fightin', tu.  
I recollect how sailors' rights was won, 230  
Yard locked in yard, hot gun-lip kissin'  
gun:  
Why, afore thet, John Bull sot up thet he  
Hed gut a kind o' mortgage on the sea;  
You'd thought he held by Gran'ther  
Adam's will,  
An' ef you knuckle down, *he* 'll think so  
still.  
Better thet all our ships an' all their crews  
Should sink to rot in ocean's dreamless  
ooze,  
Each torn flag wavin' challenge ez it went,  
An' each dumb gun a brave man's moni-  
ment,  
'Than seek sech peace ez only cowards  
crave: 240  
Give *me* the peace of dead men or of brave!

## THE MONIMENT

I say, ole boy, it ain't the Glorious Fourth:  
You'd oughto larned 'fore this wut talk  
wuz worth.  
It ain't *our* nose thet gits put out o' jint;  
It 's England thet gives up her dearest pint.  
We 've gut, I tell ye now, enough to du  
In our own fem'ly fight, afore we 're thru.  
I hoped, las' spring, jest arter Sumter's  
shame,  
When every flag-staff flapped its tethered  
flame,  
An' all the people, startled from their  
doubt, 250

Come must'rin' to the flag with sech a  
shout,—

I hoped to see things settled 'fore this fall,  
The Rebbles licked, Jeff Davis hanged, an'  
all;

Then come Bull Run, an' *sence* then I 've  
ben waitin'

Like boys in Jennoary thaw for skatin',  
Nothin' to du but watch my shadder's trace  
Swing, like a ship at anchor, roun' my base,  
With daylight's flood an' ebb: it 's gittin'  
slow,

An' I 'most think we 'd better let 'em go.  
I tell ye wut, this war 's a-goin' to cost —

## THE BRIDGE

An' I tell *you* it wun't be money lost; 261  
Taxes milks dry, but, neighbor, you 'll allow  
Thet havin' things onsettled kills the cow:  
We 've gut to fix this thing for good an' all;  
It 's no use buildin' wut 's a-goin' to fall.  
I 'm older 'n you, an' I 've seen things an'  
men,

An' *my* experunce,— tell ye wut it 's ben:  
Folks thet worked thorough was the ones  
thet thriv,

But bad work follers ye ez long 's ye live;  
You can't git red on 't; jest ez sure ez sin,  
It 's ollers askin' to be done agin: 271  
Ef we should part, it would n't be a week  
'Fore your soft-soddered peace would spring  
aleak.

We 've turned our cuffs up, but, to put her  
thru,

We must git mad an' off with jackets, tu;  
'T wun't du to think thet killin' ain't per-  
lite,—

You 've gut to be in airnest, ef you fight;  
Why, two thirds o' the Rebbles 'ould cut  
dirt,

Ef they once thought thet Guv'ment meant  
to hurt;

An' I *du* wish our Gin'ral's hed in mind 280  
The folks in front more than the folks be-  
hind;

You wun't do much ontill you think it 's God,  
An' not constitoounts, thet holds the rod;  
We want some more o' Gideon's sword, I  
jedge,

For proclamations ha'n't no gret of edge;  
There 's nothin' for a cancer but the knife,  
Onless you set by 't more than by your life.  
I 've seen hard times; I see a war begun  
Thet folks thet love their bellies never 'd  
won;

Pharo's lean kine hung on for seven long  
 year;<sup>290</sup>  
 But when 't was done, we didn't count it  
 dear;  
 Why, law an' order, honor, civil right,  
 Ef they ain't wuth it, wut is wuth a fight?  
 I'm older 'n you: the plough, the axe, the  
 mill,  
 All kin's o' labor an' all kin's o' skill,  
 - Would be a rabbit in a wile-cat's claw,  
 Ef 't warn't for thet slow critter, 'stablished  
 law;  
 Onsettle thet, an' all the world goes whiz,  
 A screw's gut loose in everythin' there is:  
 Good buttresses once settled, don't you fret  
 An' stir 'em; take a bridge's word for thet!  
 Young folks are smart, but all ain't good  
 thet's new;<sup>302</sup>  
 I guess the gran'thers they knowed sunthin',  
 tu.

## THE MONIMENT

Amen to thet! build sure in the beginnin':  
 An' then don't never tech the underpinnin':  
 Th' older a guv'ment is, the better 't suits;  
 New ones hunt folks's corns out like new  
 boots:  
 Change jes' for change, is like them big  
 hotels  
 Where they shift plates, an' let ye live on  
 smells.

## THE BRIDGE

Wal, don't give up afore the ship goes  
 down:<sup>310</sup>  
 It's a stiff gale, but Providence wun't  
 drown;  
 An' God wun't leave us yit to sink or swim,  
 Ef we don't fail to du wut's right by Him.  
 This land o' ourn, I tell ye, 's gut to be  
 A better country than man ever see.  
 I feel my sperit swellin' with a cry  
 Thet seems to say, 'Break forth an' prophesy!'  
 O strange New World, thet yit wast never  
 young,  
 Whose youth from thee by gripin' need  
 was wrung,  
 Brown foundlin' o' the woods, whose baby-  
 bed<sup>320</sup>  
 Was prowled roun' by the Injun's cracklin'  
 tread,  
 An' who grew 'st strong thru shifts an' wants  
 an' pains,  
 Nussed by stern men with empires in their  
 brains,

Who saw in vision their young Ishmel  
 strain  
 With each hard hand a vassal ocean's mane,  
 Thou, skilled by Freedom an' by gret events  
 To pitch new States ez Old-World men  
 pitch tents,  
 Thou, taught by Fate to know Jehovah's  
 plan  
 Thet man's devices can't unmake a man,  
 An' whose free latch-string never was  
 drawed in<sup>330</sup>  
 Against the poorest child of Adam's kin, —  
 The grave 's not dug where traitor hands  
 shall lay  
 In fearful haste thy murdered corse away!  
 I see —

Jest here some dogs begun to bark,  
 So thet I lost old Concord's last remark:  
 I listened long, but all I seemed to hear  
 Was dead leaves gossipin' on some birch-  
 trees near;  
 But ez they hed n't no gret things to say,  
 An' sed 'em often, I come right away,  
 An', walkin' home'ards, jest to pass the  
 time,<sup>340</sup>  
 I put some thoughts thet bothered me in  
 rhyme;  
 I hain't hed time to fairly try 'em on,  
 But here they be — it's

## JONATHAN TO JOHN

It don't seem hardly right, John,  
 When both my hands was full,  
 To stump me to a fight, John, —  
 Your cousin, tu, John Bull!  
 Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess  
 We know it now,' sez he,  
 'The lion's paw is all the law,<sup>350</sup>  
 Accordin' to J. B.,  
 Thet 's fit for you an' me!'

You wonder why we're hot, John?  
 Your mark wuz on the guns,  
 The neutral guns, thet shot, John,  
 Our brothers an' our sons:  
 Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess  
 There's human blood,' sez he,  
 'By fits an' starts, in Yankee hearts,  
 Though 't may surprise J. B.<sup>360</sup>  
 More 'n it would you an' me.'

Ef I turned mad dogs loose, John,  
 On your front-parlor stairs,

Would it jest meet your views, John,  
To wait an' sue their heirs?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,  
I on'y guess,' sez he,  
'Thet ef Vattel on his toes fell,  
'T would kind o' rile J. B.,  
Ez wal ez you an' me !' 370

Who made the law thet hurts, John,  
*Heads I win, — ditto tails?*

'J. B.' was on his shirts, John,  
Onless my memory fails.  
Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess  
(I'm good at thet),' sez he,  
'Thet sauce for goose ain't jest the juice  
For ganders with J. B.,  
No more 'n with you or me !'

When your rights was our wrongs, John,  
You did n't stop for fuss, — 381

Britanny's trident prongs, John,  
Was good 'nough law for us.  
Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,  
Though physic's good,' sez he,  
'It does n't foller thet he can swaller  
Prescriptions signed "J. B.,"  
Put up by you an' me !'

We own the ocean, tu, John:

You mus' n' take it hard, 390  
Ef we can't think with you, John,  
It's jest your own back-yard.  
Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,  
Ef thet's his claim,' sez he,  
'The fencin'-stuff 'll cost enough  
To bust up friend J. B.,  
Ez wal ez you an' me !'

Why talk so dreffle big, John,

Of honor when it meant  
You did n't care a fig, John, 400  
But jest for *ten per cent*?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess  
He's like the rest,' sez he:  
'When all is done, it's number one  
Thet's nearest to J. B.,  
Ez wal ez t' you an' me !'

We give the critters back, John,

➤ Cos Abram thought 't was right;  
It warn't your bullyin' clack, John,  
Provokin' us to fight. 410

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess  
We've a hard row,' sez he,  
'To hoe jest now; but thet, somehow,

May happen to J. B.,  
Ez wal ez you an' me !'

We ain't so weak an' poor, John,  
With twenty million people,  
An' close to every door, John,  
A school-house an' a steeple. 420

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,  
It is a fact,' sez he,  
'The surest plan to make a Man  
Is, think him so, J. B.,  
Ez much ez you or me !'

Our folks believe in Law, John;  
An' it's for her sake, now,  
They've left the axe an' saw, John,  
The anvil an' the plough.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,  
Ef 't warn't for law,' sez he, 430  
'There 'd be one shindy from here to Indy;  
An' thet don't suit J. B.  
(When 't ain't 'twixt you an' me !)'

We know we've got a cause, John,  
Thet's honest, just, an' true;  
We thought 't would win applause, John,  
Ef nowheres else, from you.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess  
His love of right,' sez he,  
'Hangs by a rotten fibre o' cotton: 440  
There's natur' in J. B.,  
Ez wal 'z in you an' me !'

The South says, '*Poor folks down!*' John,  
An' '*All men up!*' say we, —  
White, yaller, black, an' brown, John:  
Now which is your idee?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,  
John preaches wal,' sez he;  
'But, sermon thru, an' come to *du*,  
Why, there's the old J. B. 450  
A-crowdin' you an' me !'

Shall it be love, or hate, John?

It's you thet's to decide;  
Ain't your bonds held by Fate, John  
Like all the world's beside?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess  
Wise men forgive,' sez he,  
'But not forgit; an' some time yit  
Thet truth may strike J. B.,  
Ez wal ez you an' me !' 460

God means to make this land, John,  
Clear thru, from sea to sea,



Believe an' understand, John,  
 The *wuth* o' bein' free.  
 Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,  
 God's price is high,' sez he;  
 'But nothin' else than wut He sells  
 Wears long, an' thet J. B.  
 May larn, like you an' me!'

December, 1861.

February, 1862.

## No. VI

SUNTHIN' IN THE PASTORAL  
LINE<sup>1</sup>

ONCE git a smell o' musk into a draw,  
 An' it clings hold like precedents in law:  
 Your gra'ma'am put it there, — when, good-  
 ness knows, —  
 To jes' this-worldify her Sunday-clo'es;  
 But the old chist wun't sarve her gran'son's  
 wife  
 (For, 'thout new funnitoor, wut good in  
 life?),  
 An' so ole clawfoot, from the precinks  
 dread  
 O' the spare chamber, slinks into the shed,  
 Where, dim with dust, it fust or last sub-  
 sides  
 To holdin' seeds an' fifty things besides;<sup>10</sup>  
 But better days stick fast in heart an' husk,  
 An' all you keep in 't gits a scent o' musk.

Jes' so with poets: wut they 've airly read  
 Gits kind o' worked into their heart an'  
 head,  
 So 's 't they can't seem to write but jest on  
 sheers  
 With furrin countries or played-out ideers,  
 Nor hev a feelin', ef it doos n't smack  
 O' wut some critter chose to feel 'way  
 back:  
 This makes 'em talk o' daisies, larks, an'  
 things,  
 Ez though we 'd nothin' here that blows an'  
 sings<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He [Arthur Hugh Clough] often suggested that I should try my hand at some Yankee Pastorals, which would admit of more sentiment and a higher tone without foregoing the advantage offered by the dialect. I have never completed anything of the kind, but, in this Second Series, both my remembrance of his counsel and the deeper feeling called up by the great interests at stake, led me to venture some passages nearer to what is called poetical than could have been admitted without incongruity into the former series. (LOWELL, in the 'Introduction' to the *Biglow Papers*, 1866.)

(Why, I 'd give more for one live bobolink  
 Than a square mile o' larks in printer's  
 ink), —  
 This makes 'em think our fust o' May is  
 May,  
 Which 't ain't, for all the almanicks can  
 say.

O little city-gala, don't never go it  
 Blind on the word o' noospaper or poet!  
 They 're apt to puff, an' May-day seldom  
 looks  
 Up in the country ez 't doos in books;  
 They 're no more like than hornets'-nests  
 an' hives,  
 Or printed sarmons be to holy lives.<sup>30</sup>  
 I, with my trouses perched on cowhide  
 boots,  
 Tuggin' my foundered feet out by the roots,  
 Hev seen ye come to fling on April's hearse  
 Your muslin nosegays from the milliner's,  
 Puzzlin' to find dry ground your queen to  
 choose,  
 An' dance your throats sore in morocker  
 shoes:  
 I 've seen ye an' felt proud, thet, come wut  
 would,  
 Our Pilgrim stock wuz pethed with hardi-  
 hood.  
 Pleasure doos make us Yankees kind o'  
 winch,  
 Ez though 't wuz sunthin' paid for by the  
 inch;<sup>40</sup>  
 But yit we du contrive to worry thru,  
 Ef Dooty tells us thet the thing 's to du,  
 An' kerry a hollerday, ef we set out,  
 Ez stiddily ez though 't wuz a redoubt.

I, country-born an' bred, know where to find  
 Some blooms thet make the season suit the  
 mind,  
 An' seem to metch the doubtin' bluebird's  
 notes, —  
 Half-vent'rin' liverworts in furry coats,  
 Bloodroots, whose rolled-up leaves ef you  
 oncurl,  
 Each on 'em 's cradle to a baby-pearl, —<sup>50</sup>  
 But these are jes' Spring's pickets; sure ez  
 sin,  
 The rebbles frosts 'll try to drive 'em in;  
 For half our May 's so awfully like May n't,  
 't would rile a Shaker or an evrige saint;  
 Though I own up I like our back'ard springs  
 Thet kind o' haggle with their greens an'  
 things,

An' when you 'most give up, 'uthout more  
words  
Toss the fields full o' blossoms, leaves, an'  
birds;  
Thet's Northun natur', slow an' apt to  
doubt,  
But when it *doos* git stirred, ther' 's no gin-  
out! 60

Fust come the blackbirds clatt'rin' in tall  
trees,  
An' settlin' things in windy Congresses, —  
Queer politicians, though, for I'll be  
skinned

Ef all on 'em don't head against the wind.  
'fore long the trees begin to show belief, —  
The maple crimsons to a coral-reef,  
Then saffern swarms swing off from all the  
willers

So plump they look like yaller caterpillars,  
Then gray hossches'nuts leetle hands un-  
fold

Softer 'n a baby's be at three days old: 70  
Thet's robin-redbreast's almanick; he  
knows

Thet arter this ther' 's only blossom-snows;  
So, choosin' out a handy crotch an' spouse,  
He goes to plast'rin' his adobe house.

Then seems to come a hitch, — things lag  
behind,

Till some fine mornin' Spring makes up her  
mind,

An' ez, when snow-swelled rivers cresh  
their dams

Heaped-up with ice thet dovetails in an'  
jams,

A leak comes spirtin' thru some pin-hole  
cleft,

Grows stronger, fercer, tears out right an'  
left, 80

Then all the waters bow themselves an'  
come,

Suddin, in one gret slope o' shedderin' foam,  
Jes' so our Spring gits everythin' in tune

An' gives one leap from Aperl into June:  
Then all comes crowdin' in; afore you  
think,

Young oak-leaves mist the side-hill woods  
with pink;

The catbird in the laylock-bush is loud;  
The orchards turn to heaps o' rosy cloud;

Red-cedars blossom tu, though few folks  
know it,

An' look all dipt in sunshine like a poet; 90

The lime-trees pile their solid stacks o'  
shade

An' drows'ly simmer with the bees' sweet  
trade;

In ellum-shrouds the flashin' hangbird  
clings

An' for the summer vy'ge his hammock  
slings;

All down the loose-walled lanes in archin'  
bowers

The barb'ry droops its strings o' golden  
flowers,

Whose shrinkin' hearts the school-gals love  
to try

With pins, — they 'll worry yourn so, boys,  
bimeby!

But I don't love your cat'logue style, — do  
you? —

Ez ef to sell off Natur' by vendoo; 100

One word with blood in 't 's twice ez good  
ez two:

'nuff sed, June's bridesman, poet o' the year,  
Gladness on wings, the bobolink, is here;

Half-hid in tip-top apple-blooms he swings,  
Or climbs against the breeze with quiverin'

wings,

Or, givin' way to 't in a mock despair,

Runs down, a brook o' laughter, thru the  
air.

I ollus feel the sap start in my veins

In Spring, with curus heats an' prickly  
pains,

Thet drive me, when I git a chance, to  
walk 110

Off by myself to hev a privit talk

With a queer critter thet can't seem to  
'gree

Along o' me like most folks, — Mister Me.  
Ther' 's times when I 'm unsoshle ez a stone,

An' sort o' suffercate to be alone, —

I'm crowded jes' to think thet folks are  
nigh,

An' can't bear nothin' closer than the sky;

Now the wind 's full ez shifty in the mind

Ez wut it is ou'-doors, ef I ain't blind,

An' sometimes, in the fairest sou'west  
weather, 120

My innard vane pints east for weeks to-  
gether,

My natur' gits all goose-flesh, an' my sins  
Come drizzlin' on my conscience sharp ez

pins:

Wal, et sech times I jes' slip out o' sight

An' take it out in a fair stan'-up fight

With the one cuss I can't lay on the shelf,  
The crook'dest stick in all the heap, — My-  
self.

'T wuz so las' Sabbath arter meetin'-time:  
Findin' my feelin's would n't noways rhyme  
With nobody's, but off the hendle flew <sup>130</sup>  
An' took things from an east-wind pint o'  
view,

I started off to lose me in the hills  
Where the pines be, up back o' 'Siah's  
Mills:

Pines, ef you 're blue, are the best friends  
I know,

They mope an' sigh an' sheer your feelin's  
so, —

They hesh the ground beneath so, tu, I  
swan,

You half-forgit you 've gut a body on.

Ther' 's a small school'us' there where four  
roads meet,

The door-steps hollered out by little feet,  
An' side-posts carved with names whose  
owners grew <sup>140</sup>

To gret men, some on 'em, an' deacons, tu;  
'tain't used no longer, coz the town hez gut  
A high-school, where they teach the Lord  
knows wut:

Three-story larnin' 's pop'lar now; I guess  
We thriv' ez wal on jes' two stories less,  
For it strikes me ther' 's sech a thing ez  
sinnin'

By overloadin' children's underpinnin':  
Wal, here it wuz I larned my A B C,  
An' it's a kind o' favorite spot with me.

We're curus critters: Now ain't jes' the  
minute <sup>150</sup>

Thet ever fits us easy while we 're in it;  
Long ez 't wuz futur', 't would be perfect  
bliss, —

Soon ez it's past, *thet* time 's wuth ten o'  
this;

An' yit there ain't a man thet need be told  
Thet Now 's the only bird lays eggs o' gold.  
A knee-high lad, I used to plot an' plan  
An' think 't wuz life's cap-sheaf to be a  
man;

Now, gittin' gray, there 's nothin' I enjoy  
Like dreamin' back along into a boy:  
So the ole school'us' is a place I choose <sup>160</sup>  
Afore all others, ef I want to muse;  
I set down where I used to set, an' git  
My boyhood back, an' better things with  
it, —

Faith, Hope, an' sunthin', ef it is n't Cher-  
rity,

It 's want o' guile, an' thet 's ez gret a rer-  
rity, —

While Fancy's cushin', free to Prince and  
Clown,

Makes the hard bench ez soft ez milk-  
weed-down.

Now, 'fore I knowed, thet Sabbath arter-  
noon

When I sot out to tramp myself in tune,  
I found me in the school'us' on my seat, <sup>170</sup>  
Drummin' the march to No-wheres with  
my feet.

Thinkin' o' nothin', I've heerd ole folks  
say

Is a hard kind o' dooty in its way:

It's thinkin' everythin' you ever knew,  
Or ever hearn, to make your feelin's blue.

I sot there tryin' thet on for a spell:

I thought o' the Rebellion, then o' Hell,  
Which some folks tell ye now is jest a met-  
terfor

(A the'ry, p'raps, it wun't *feel* none the bet-  
ter for);

I thought o' Reconstruction, wut we'd  
win <sup>180</sup>

Patchin' our patent self-blow-up agin:

I thought of this 'ere milkin' o' the wits,  
So much a month, warn't givin' Natur'  
fits, —

Ef folks warn't druv, findin' their own milk  
fail,

To work the cow thet hez an iron tail,

An' ef idees 'thout ripenin' in the pan

Would send up cream to humor ary man:

From this to thet I let my worryin' creep,  
Till finally I must ha' fell asleep.

Our lives in sleep are some like streams  
thet glide <sup>190</sup>

'twixt flesh an' sperrit boundin' on each  
side,

Where both shores' shadders kind o' mix  
an' mingle

In sunthin' thet ain't jes' like either single;  
An' when you cast off moorin's from To-

day,

An' down towards To-morrer drift away,

The imiges thet tangle on the stream

Make a new upside-down'ard world o'  
dream:

Sometimes they seem like sunrise-streaks  
an' warnin's

O' wut 'll be in Heaven on Sabbath-morn-  
in's,  
An', mixed right in ez ef jest out o'  
spite, <sup>200</sup>  
Sunthin' thet says your supper ain't gone  
right.

I 'm gret on dreams, an' often when I wake,  
I 've lived so much it makes my mem'ry  
ache,  
An' can't skurce take a cat-nap in my  
cheer  
'thout hevin' 'em, some good, some bad, all  
queer.

Now I wuz settin' where I 'd ben, it  
seemed,

An' ain't sure yit whether I r'ally dreamed,  
Nor, ef I did, how long I might ha' slep',  
When I hearn some un stompin' up the  
step,

An' lookin' round, ef two an' two make  
four, <sup>210</sup>

I see a Pilgrim Father in the door.

He wore a steeple-hat, tall boots, an' spurs  
With rowels to 'em big ez ches'nut-burrs,  
An' his gret sword behind him sloped away  
Long 'z a man's speech thet dunno wut to  
say. —

'Ef your name's Biglow, an' your given-  
name

Hosee,' sez he, 'it's arter you I came;  
I 'm your gret-gran'ther multiplied by  
three.' —

'My wut?' sez I. — 'Your gret-gret-gret,'  
sez he:

'You would n't ha' never ben here but for  
me. <sup>220</sup>

Two hundred an' three year ago this May  
The ship I come in sailed up Boston Bay;  
I 'd been a cunnle in our Civil War, —

But wut on airth hev you gut up one for?  
Coz we du things in England, 't ain't for  
you

To git a notion you can du 'em tu:

I 'm told you write in public prints: ef  
true,

It's nateral you should know a thing or  
two.' —

'Thet air 's an argymunt I can't en-  
dorse, —

't would prove, coz you wear spurs, you kep'  
a horse: <sup>230</sup>

For brains,' sez I, 'wutever you may think,  
Ain't boun' to cash the draf's o' pen-an'-  
ink, —

Though mos' folks write ez ef they hoped  
jes' quickenin'

The churn would argoo skim-milk into  
thickenin';

But skim-milk ain't a thing to change its  
view

O' wut it's meant for more 'n a smoky  
flue.

But du pray tell me, 'fore we further go,  
How in all Natur' did you come to know  
'bout our affairs,' sez I, 'in Kingdom-  
Come?' —

'Wal, I worked round at sperrit-rappin'  
some, <sup>240</sup>

An' danced the tables till their legs wuz  
gone,

In hopes o' larnin' wut wuz goin' on,'  
Sez he, 'but mejums lie so like all-split  
Thet I concluded it wuz best to quit.

But, come now, ef you wun't confess to  
knowin',

You 've some conjectures how the thing's  
a-goin'.' —

'Gran'ther,' sez I, 'a vane warn't never  
known

Nor asked to hev a jedgment of its own;  
An' yit, ef 't ain't gut rusty in the jints,  
It's safe to trust its say on certin pints: <sup>250</sup>

It knows the wind's opinions to a T,  
An' the wind settles wut the weather 'll be.'

'I never thought a scion of our stock  
Could grow the wood to make a weather-  
cock;

When I wuz younger 'n you, skurce more 'n  
a shaver,

No airthly wind,' sez he, 'could make me  
waver!'

(Ez he said this, he clinched his jaw an'  
forehead,

Hitchin' his belt to bring his sword-hilt  
forrard.) —

'Jes so it wuz with me,' sez I, 'I swow,  
When I wuz younger 'n wut you see me

now, — <sup>260</sup>

Nothin' from Adam's fall to Huld's bon-  
net,

Thet I warn't full-cocked with my jedg-  
ment on it;

But now I 'm gittin' on in life, I find  
It's a sight harder to make up my mind, —

Nor I don't often try tu, when events  
Will du it for me free of all expense.

The moral question 's ollus plain enough, —  
It's jes' the human-natur' side thet's  
tough;

Wut 's best to think may n't puzzle me nor  
 you, —  
 The pinch comes in decidin' wut to *du*; 270  
 Ef you *read* History, all runs smooth ez  
 grease,  
 Coz there the men ain't nothin' more'n  
 idees, —  
 But come to *make* it, ez we must to-day,  
 Th' idees hev arms an' legs an' stop the way:  
 It's easy fixin' things in facts an' figgers, —  
 They can't resist, nor warn't brought up  
 with niggers;  
 But come to try your the'ry on, — why, then  
 Your facts an' figgers change to ign'ant  
 men  
 Actin' ez ugly — ' — 'Smite 'em hip an'  
 thigh!' —  
 Sez gran'ther, 'and let every man-child  
 die! 280  
 Oh for three weeks o' Crommle an' the  
 Lord!  
 Up, Isr'el, to your tents an' grind the  
 sword!' —  
 'Thet kind o' thing worked wal in ole  
 Judee,  
 But you forgit how long it's ben A. D.;  
 You think thet's ellerkence, — I call it  
 shoddy,  
 A thing,' sez I, 'wun't cover soul nor body;  
 I like the plain all-wool o' common-sense,  
 Thet warms ye now, an' will a twelve-  
 month hence.  
 You took to follerin' where the Prophets  
 beckoned,  
 An', fust you knowed on, back come Charles  
 the Second; 290  
 Now wut I want 's to hev all *we* gain stick,  
 An' not to start Millennium too quick;  
 We hain't to punish only, but to keep,  
 An' the cure 's gut to go a cent'ry deep.'  
 'Wall, milk-an'-water ain't the best o' glue,'  
 Sez he, 'an' so you'll find afore you're  
 thru;  
 Ef reshness venters sunthin', shilly-shally  
 Loses ez often wut 's ten times the vally.  
 Thet exe of ourp, when Charles's neck gut  
 split,  
 Opened a gap thet ain't bridged over yit: 300  
 Slav'ry 's your Charles, the Lord hez gin  
 the exe' —  
 'Our Charles,' sez I, 'hez gut eight mil-  
 lion necks.  
 The hardest question ain't the black man's  
 right,  
 The trouble is to 'mancipate the white;

One 's chained in body an' can be sot free,  
 But t' other 's chained in soul to an idee:  
 It's a long job, but we shall worry thru it;  
 Ef bagnets fail, the spellin'-book must *du*  
 it.'  
 'Hosee,' sez he, 'I think you 're goin to fail:  
 The rattlesnake ain't dangerous in the  
 tail; 310  
 This 'ere rebellion 's nothing but the ret-  
 tle, —  
 You 'll stompon thet an' think you 've won  
 the bettle;  
 It 's Slavery thet 's the fangs an' thinkin'  
 head,  
 An' ef you want selvation, cresh it dead, —  
 An' cresh it suddin, or you 'll larn by  
 waitin'  
 Thet Chance wun't stop to listen to de-  
 batin'!' —  
 'God's truth!' sez I, — 'an' ef I held the  
 club,  
 An' knowed jes' where to strike, — but  
 there 's the rub!' —  
 'Strike soon,' sez he, 'or you 'll be deadly  
 ailin', —  
 Folks thet 's afeared to fail are sure o'  
 failin'; 320  
 God hates your sneakin' creturs thet be-  
 lieve  
 He 'll settle things they run away an'  
 leave!'  
 He brought his foot down fercely, ez he  
 spoke,  
 An' give me sech a startle thet I woke.  
 1862. June, 1862.

## No. VII

## LATEST VIEWS OF MR. BIGLOW

Ef I a song or two could make  
 Like rockets druv by their own burnin',  
 All leap an' light, to leave a wake  
 Men's hearts an' faces skyward turn-  
 in'! —  
 But, it strikes me, 't ain't jest the time  
 Fer stringin' words with settisfaction:  
 Wut 's wanted now 's the silent rhyme  
 'Twixt upright Will an' downright Ac-  
 tion.  
 Words, ef you keep 'em, pay their keep,  
 But gabble 's the short cut to ruin; 10  
 It 's gratis (gals half-price), but cheap  
 At no rate, ef it henders doin';

Ther' 's nothin' wuss, 'less 't is to set  
 A martyr-prem'um upon jawrin':  
 Teapots git dangerous, ef you shet  
 Their lids down on 'em with Fort War-  
 ren.

'Bout long enough it 's ben discussed  
 Who sot the magazine afire,  
 An' whether, ef Bob Wickliffe bust,  
 'T would scare us more or blow us  
 higher. 20

D' ye s'pose the Gret Foreseer's plan  
 Wuz settled fer him in town-meetin' ?  
 Or thet ther' 'd ben no Fall o' Man,  
 Ef Adam 'd on'y bit a sweetin' ?

Oh, Jon'than, ef you want to be  
 A rugged chap agin an' hearty,  
 Go fer wutever 'll hurt Jeff D.,  
 Nut wut 'll boost up ary party.  
 Here 's hell broke loose, an' we lay flat  
 With half the univarse a-singein', 30  
 Till Sen'tor This an' Gov'nor Thet  
 Stop squabblin' fer the garding-ingin.

It 's war we 're in, not politics;  
 It 's systems wrastlin' now, not parties;  
 An' victory in the eend 'll fix  
 Where longest will an' truest heart is.  
 An' wut 's the Guv'ment folks about ?  
 Tryin' to hope ther' 's nothin' doin',  
 An' look ez though they did n't doubt  
 Sunthin' pertickler wuz a-brewin'. 40

Ther' 's critters yit thet talk an' act  
 Fer wut they call Conciliation;  
 They 'd hand a buff'lo-drove a tract  
 When they wuz madder than all Ba-  
 shan.

Conciliate ? it jest means *be kicked*,  
 No metter how they phrase an' tone it;  
 It means thet we 're to set down licked,  
 Thet we 're poor shotes an' glad to own  
 it !

A war on tick 's ez dear 'z the deuce,  
 But it wun't leave no lastin' traces, 50  
 Ez 't would to make a sneakin' truce  
 Without no moral specie-basis:  
 Ef greenbacks ain't nut jest the cheese,  
 I guess ther' 's evils thet 's extremer, —  
 Fer instance, — shinplaster idees  
 Like them put out by Gov'nor Seymour.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horatio Seymour (1810-1886), of Utica, New York, was one of the most prominent and respected men in

Last year, the Nation, at a word,  
 When tremblin' Freedom cried to shield  
 her,  
 Flamed weldin' into one keen sword  
 Waitin' an' longin' fer a wielder: 60  
 A splendid flash ! — but how 'd the grasp  
 With sech a chance ez thet wuz tally ?  
 Ther' warn't no meanin' in our clasp, —  
 Half this, half thet, all shilly-shally.

More men ? More Man ! It 's there we fail;  
 Weak plans grow weaker yit by length-  
 enin' :

Wut use in addin' to the tail,  
 When it 's the head 's in need o' strength-  
 enin' ?

We wanted one thet felt all Chief  
 From roots o' hair to sole o' stockin', 70  
 Square-sot with thousan'-ton belief  
 In him an' us, ef earth went rockin' !

Ole Hick'ry would n't ha' stood see-saw  
 'Bout doin' things till they wuz done  
 with, —

He 'd smashed the tables o' the Law  
 In time o' need to load his gun with;  
 He could n't see but jest one side, —  
 Ef his, 't wuz God's, an' thet wuz plenty;  
 An' so his '*Forrards* !' multiplied  
 An army's fightin' weight by twenty. 80

But this 'ere histin', creak, creak, creak,  
 Your cappen's heart up with a derrick,  
 This tryin' to coax a lightnin'-streak  
 Out of a half-discouraged hay-rick,  
 This hangin' on mont' arter mont'  
 Fer one sharp purpose 'mongst the  
 twitter, —

I tell ye, it doos kind o' stunt  
 The peth and sperit of a critter.

In six months where 'll the People be,  
 Ef leaders look on revolution 90  
 Ez though it wuz a cup o' tea, —  
 Jest social el'ments in solution ?  
 This weighin' things doos wal enough  
 When war cools down, an' comes to  
 writin' ;

the Democratic party, and a bitter opponent of Lincoln. He had at this time been recently elected governor of New York on a platform that denounced almost every measure the government had found it necessary to adopt for the suppression of the Rebellion. His influence contributed not a little to the encouragement of that spirit which inspired the Draft Riot in the city of New York in July, 1863. (F. B. Williams, in *Riverside and Cambridge Editions*.)



But while it's makin', the true stuff  
Is pison-mad, pig-headed fightin'.

Democ'acy gives every man  
The right to be his own oppressor ;  
But a loose Gov'ment ain't the plan,  
Helpless ez spilled beans on a dresser: 100  
I tell ye one thing we might larn  
From them smart critters, the Seced-  
ers, —  
Ef bein' right's the fust consarn,  
The 'fore-the-fust's cast-iron leaders.

But 'pears to me I see some signs  
Thet we're a-goin' to use our senses:  
Jeff druv us into these hard lines,  
An' ough' to bear his half th' expenses;  
Slavery's Secession's heart an' will,  
South, North, East, West, where'er you  
find it, 110  
An' ef it drows into War's mill,  
D'ye say them thunder-stones sha'n't  
grind it ?

D'ye s'pose, ef Jeff giv him a lick,  
Ole Hick'ry 'd tried his head to sof'n  
So 's't would n't hurt thet ebony stick  
Thet's made our side see stars so  
of'n ?  
'No !' he'd ha' thundered, 'on your knees,  
An' own one flag, one road to glory !  
Soft-heartedness, in times like these,  
Shows sof'ness in the upper story !' 120

An' why should we kick up a muss  
About the Pres'dunt's proclamation ?<sup>1</sup>  
It ain't a-goin' to lib'rate us,  
Ef we don't like emancipation:  
The right to be a cussed fool  
Is safe from all devices human,  
It's common (ez a gin'l rule)  
To every critter born o' woman.

So we're all right, an' I, fer one,  
Don't think our cause'll lose in vally 130  
By rammin' Scriptur in our gun,  
An' gittin' Natur' fer an ally:  
Thank God, say I, fer even a plan  
To lift one human bein's level,  
Give one more chance to make a man,  
Or, anyhow, to spile a devil !

Not thet I'm one thet much expec'  
Millennium by express to-morrer;

<sup>1</sup> The Emancipation Proclamation.

They will miscarry, — I rec'lec'  
Tu many on 'em, to my sorrer: 140  
Men ain't made angels in a day,  
No matter how you mould an' labor  
'em,  
Nor 'riginal ones, I guess, don't stay  
With Abe so of'n ez with Abraham.

The'ry thinks Fact a pooty thing,  
An' wants the banns read right ensuin';  
But fact wun't noways wear the ring,  
'Thout years o' settin' up an' woom':  
Though, arter all, Time's dial-plate  
Marks cent'ries with the minute-finger,  
An' Good can't never come tu late, 150  
Though it doos seem to try an' linger.

An' come wut will, I think it's grand  
Abe's gut his will et last bloom-fur-  
naced  
In trial-flames till it 'll stand  
The strain o' bein' in deadly earnest:  
Thet's wut we want, — we want to know  
The folks on our side hez the bravery  
To b'lieve ez hard, come weal, come woe,  
In Freedom ez Jeff doos in Slavery. 160

Set the two forces foot to foot,  
An' every man knows who 'll be winner,  
Whose faith in God hez ary root  
Thet goes down deeper than his dinner:  
Then 't will be felt from pole to pole,  
Without no need o' proclamation,  
Earth's biggest Country's gut her soul  
An' risen up Earth's Greatest Nation!  
February, 1863.

## NO. X

MR. HOSEA BIGLOW TO THE  
EDITOR OF THE ATLANTIC  
MONTHLY

DEAR SIR, — Your letter come to han'  
Requestin' me to please be funny;  
But I ain't made upon a plan  
Thet knows wut's comin', gall or honey:  
Ther' 's times the world doos look so queer,  
Odd fancies come afore I call 'em;  
An' then agin, for half a year,  
No preacher 'thout a call 's more solemn.

You're 'n want o' sunthin' light an' cute,  
Rattlin' an' shrewd an' kin' o' jingle-  
ish, . 19



An' wish, pervidin' it 'ould suit,  
 I 'd take an' citify my English.  
 I *ken* write long-tailed, ef I please, —  
 But when I 'm jokin', no, I thankee;  
 Then, 'fore I know it, my idees  
 Run helter-skelter into Yankee.

Sence I begun to scribble rhyme,  
 I tell ye wut, I hain't ben foolin';  
 The parson's books, life, death, an' time  
 Hev took some trouble with my school-  
 in'; 20  
 Nor th' airth don't git put out with me,  
 Thet love her 'z though she wuz a  
 woman;  
 Why, th' ain't a bird upon the tree  
 But half forgives my bein' human.

An' yit I love th' unhighschool'd way  
 Ol' farmers hed when I wuz younger;  
 Their talk wuz meatier, an' 'ould stay,  
 While book-froth seems to whet your  
 hunger;  
 For puttin' in a downright lick  
 'twixt Humbug's eyes, ther' 's few can  
 metch it, 30  
 An' then it helves my thoughts ez slick  
 Ez stret-grained hickory doos a hetchet.

But when I can't, I can't, thet 's all,  
 For Natur' won't put up with gullin';  
 Idees you hev to shove an' haul  
 Like a druv pig ain't wuth a mullein:  
 Live thoughts ain't sent for; thru all  
 rifts  
 O' sense they pour an' resh ye onwards,  
 Like rivers when south-lyin' drifts  
 Feel thet th' old airth 's a-wheelin' sun-  
 wards. 40

Time wuz, the rhymes come crowdin' thick  
 Ez office-seekers arter 'lection,  
 An' into ary place 'ould stick  
 Without no bother nor objection;  
 But sence the war my thoughts hang  
 back  
 Ez though I wanted to enlist 'em,  
 An' subs'tutes, — *they* don't never lack,  
 But then they 'll slope afore you 've  
 mist 'em.

Nothin' don't seem like wut it wuz;  
 I can't see wut there is to hender, 50  
 An' yit my brains jes' go buzz, buzz,  
 Like bumblebees agin a winder;

'fore these times come, in all airth's row,  
 Ther' wuz one quiet place, my head in,  
 Where I could hide an' think, — but now  
 It 's all one teeter, hopin', dreadin'.

Where 's Peace? I start, some clear-blown  
 night,  
 When gaunt stone walls grow numb an'  
 number,  
 An', creakin' 'cross the snow-crus' white,  
 Walk the col' starlight into summer; 60  
 Up grows the moon, an' swell by swell  
 Thru the pale pasturs silvers dimmer  
 Than the last smile thet strives to tell  
 O' love gone heavenward in its shim-  
 mer.

I hev been gladder o' sech things  
 Than cocks o' spring or bees o' clover,  
 They filled my heart with livin' springs,  
 But now they seem to freeze 'em over;  
 Sights innercent ez babes on knee,  
 Peaceful ez eyes o' pastur'd cattle, 70  
 Jes' coz they be so, seem to me  
 To rile me more with thoughts o' battle.

Indoors an' out by spells I try;  
 Ma'am Natur' keeps her spin-wheel  
 goin',  
 But leaves my natur' stiff and dry  
 Ez fiel's o' clover arter mowin';  
 An' her jes' keepin' on the same,  
 Calmer 'n a clock, an' never carin',  
 An' findin' nary thing to blame,  
 Is wus than ef she took to swearin'. 80

Snow-flakes come whisperin' on the pane  
 The charm makes blazin' logs so plea-  
 sant,  
 But I can't hark to wut they 're say'n',  
 With Grant or Sherman ollers present;  
 The chimbleys shudder in the gale,  
 Thet lulls, then suddin takes to flappin'  
 Like a shot hawk, but all 's ez stale  
 To me ez so much sperit-rappin'.

Under the yaller-pines I house,  
 When sunshine makes 'em all sweet-  
 scented, 90  
 An' hear among their furry boughs  
 The baskin' west-wind purr contented,  
 While 'way o'erhead, ez sweet an' low  
 Ez distant bells thet ring for meetin',  
 The wedged wil' geese their bugles blow,  
 Further an' further South retreatin'.

Or up the slippery knob I strain  
 An' see a hundred hills like islan's  
 Lift their blue woods in broken chain  
 Out o' the sea o' snowy silence; <sup>100</sup>  
 The farm-smokes, sweetes' sight on airth,  
 Slow thru the winter air a-shrinkin'  
 Seem kin' o' sad, an' roun' the hearth  
 Of empty places set me thinkin'.

Beaver roars hoarse with meltin' snows,  
 An' rattles di'mon's from his granite;  
 Time wuz, he snatched away my prose,  
 An' into psalms or satires ran it;  
 But he, nor all the rest thet once  
 Started my blood to country-dances, <sup>110</sup>  
 Can't set me goin' more 'n a dunce  
 Thet hain't no use for dreams an' fan-  
 cies.

Rat-tat-tat-tattle thru the street  
 I hear the drummers makin' riot,  
 An' I set thinkin' o' the feet  
 Thet follered once an' now are quiet, —  
 White feet ez snowdrops innercent,  
 Thet never knowed the paths o' Satan,  
 Whose comin' step ther' 's ears thet won't,  
 No, not lifelong, leave off awaitin'. <sup>120</sup>

Why, hain't I held 'em on my knee? <sup>1</sup>  
 Did n't I love to see 'em growin',  
 Three likely lads ez wal could be,  
 Hahnsome an' brave an' not tu knowin' ?  
 I set an' look into the blaze  
 Whose natur', jes' like theirn, keeps  
 climbin',  
 Ez long 'z it lives, in shinin' ways,  
 An' half despise myself for rhym'in'.

<sup>1</sup> Of Lowell's three nephews one, William Lowell Putnam, was killed, and another, James Jackson Lowell, seriously wounded, at the battle of Ball's Bluff, the same battle in which Holmes's son was wounded (see 'My Hunt After the Captain'); the third, Charles Russell Lowell, died October 20, 1864, of wounds received the previous day at the battle of Cedar Creek. James Jackson Lowell recovered from the wounds received at Ball's Bluff, but was killed in the battle of Seven Pines. See *Lowell's Letters*, vol. i, pp. 162-166; and Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. ii, pp. 29-31.

See also the note on Emerson's 'Sacrifice,' p. 95, note 1; and Colonel Henry Lee Higginson's *Four Addresses*, there referred to. Emerson wrote to Carlyle, October 15, 1870: 'The Lowell race, again, in our War yielded three or four martyrs so able and tender and true, that James Russell Lowell cannot allude to them in verse or prose but the public is melted anew.' (*Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence*, vol. ii, p. 374.) See also Lowell's 'Commemoration Ode,' p. 490, and 'Under the Old Elm,' p. 512, with the passages from his letters there quoted.

Wut 's words to them whose faith an'  
 truth  
 On War's red techstone rang true metal,  
 Who ventured life an' love an' youth <sup>131</sup>  
 For the gret prize o' death in battle?  
 To him who, deadly hurt, agen  
 Flashed on afore the charge's thunder,<sup>2</sup>  
 Tippin' with fire the bolt of men  
 Thet rived the Rebel line asunder?

'T ain't right to hev the young go fust,  
 All throbbin' full o' gifts an' graces,  
 Leavin' life's paupers dry ez dust  
 To try an' make b'lieve fill their places:  
 Nothin' but tells us wut we miss, <sup>141</sup>  
 Ther' 's gaps our lives can't never fay  
 in,  
 An' thet world seems so fur from this  
 Lef' for us loafers to grow gray in!

My eyes cloud up for rain; my mouth  
 Will take to twitchin' roun' the cor-  
 ners;  
 I pity mothers, tu, down South,  
 For all they sot among the scornors:  
 I'd sooner take my chance to stan'  
 At Jedgegment where your meanest slave  
 is, <sup>150</sup>  
 Than at God's bar hol' up a han'  
 Ez drippin' red ez yourn, Jeff Davis!

Come, Peace! not like a mourner bowed  
 For honor lost an' dear ones wasted,  
 But proud, to meet a people proud,  
 With eyes thet tell o' triumph tasted!  
 Come, with han' grippin' on the hilt,  
 An' step thet proves ye Victory's daugh-  
 ter!

Longin' for you, our sperits wilt  
 Like shipwrecked men's on raf's for  
 water. <sup>160</sup>

Come, while our country feels the lift  
 Of a gret instinct shoutin' 'Forwards!'  
 An' knows that freedom ain't a gift  
 Thet tarries long in han's o' cowards!  
 Come, sech ez mothers prayed for, when  
 They kissed their cross with lips thet  
 quivered,  
 An' bring fair wages for brave men,  
 A nation saved, a race delivered!

April, 1863.

<sup>2</sup> General Charles Russell Lowell, at the battle of Cedar Creek.

ON BOARD THE '76<sup>1</sup>

WRITTEN FOR MR. BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

NOVEMBER 3, 1864

OUR ship lay tumbling in an angry sea,  
 Her rudder gone, her mainmast o'er the  
 side;  
 Her scuppers, from the waves' clutch stag-  
 gering free,  
 Trailed threads of priceless crimson  
 through the tide;  
 Sails, shrouds, and spars with pirate cannon  
 torn,  
 We lay, awaiting morn.

Awaiting morn, such morn as mocks de-  
 spair;  
 And she that bare the promise of the  
 world  
 Within her sides, now hopeless, helmless,  
 bare,  
 At random o'er the wildering waters  
 hurled;  
 The reek of battle drifting slow alee  
 Not sullener than we.

Morn came at last to peer into our woe,  
 When lo, a sail! Now surely help was  
 nigh;  
 The red cross flames aloft, Christ's pledge;  
 but no,  
 Her black guns grinning hate, she rushes  
 by  
 And hails us:— 'Gains the leak! Ay, so  
 we thought!  
 Sink, then, with curses fraught!'

I leaned against my gun still angry-hot,  
 And my lids tingled with the tears held  
 back:  
 This scorn methought was crueller than  
 shot:  
 The manly death-grip in the battle-wrack,  
 Yard-arm to yard-arm, were more friendly  
 far  
 Than such fear-smothered war.

There our foe wallowed, like a wounded  
 brute  
 The fiercer for his hurt. What now  
 were best?

<sup>1</sup> See the third quotation from *Lowell's Letters*, in  
 note on p. 444.

Once more tug bravely at the peril's root,  
 Though death came with it? Or evade  
 the test  
 If right or wrong in this God's world of ours  
 Be leagued with mightier powers? 30

Some, faintly loyal, felt their pulses lag  
 With the slow beat that doubts and  
 then despairs;  
 Some, caitiff, would have struck the starry  
 flag  
 That knits us with our past, and makes  
 us heirs  
 Of deeds high-hearted as were ever done  
 'Neath the all-seeing sun.

But there was one, the Singer of our crew,  
 Upon whose head Age waved his peace-  
 ful sign,  
 But whose red heart's-blood no surrender  
 knew;  
 And couchant under brows of massive  
 line,  
 The eyes, like guns beneath a parapet,  
 Watched, charged with lightnings yet. 40

The voices of the hills did his obey;  
 The torrents flashed and tumbled in his  
 song;  
 He brought our native fields from far  
 away,  
 Or set us 'mid the innumerable throng  
 Of dateless woods, or where we heard the  
 calm  
 Old homestead's evening psalm.

But now he sang of faith to things unseen,  
 Of freedom's birthright given to us in  
 trust;  
 And words of doughty cheer he spoke be-  
 tween,  
 That made all earthly fortune seem as  
 dust,  
 Matched with that duty, old as Time and  
 new,  
 Of being brave and true.

We, listening, learned what makes the  
 might of words,—  
 Manhood to back them, constant as a  
 star;  
 His voice rammed home our cannon, edged  
 our swords,  
 And sent our boarders shouting; shroud  
 and spar

Heard him and stiffened; the sails heard,  
and wooed  
The winds with loftier mood. 60

In our dark hours he manned our guns  
again;  
Remanned ourselves from his own man-  
hood's stores;  
Pride, honor, country, throbbed through  
all his strain;  
And shall we praise? God's praise was  
his before;  
And on our futile laurels he looks down,  
Himself our bravest crown.

1864.

1865.

### ODE RECITED AT THE HAR- VARD COMMEMORATION<sup>1</sup>

JULY 21, 1865

I

WEAK-WINGED is song,  
Nor aims at that clear-ethered height  
Whither the brave deed climbs for light:  
We seem to do them wrong,

<sup>1</sup> The Commemoration services (July 21, 1865) took place in the open air, in the presence of a great assembly. Prominent among the speakers were Major-General Meade, the hero of Gettysburg, and Major-General Devens. The wounds of the war were still fresh and bleeding, and the interest of the occasion was deep and thrilling. The summer afternoon was drawing to its close when the poet began the recital of the ode. No living audience could for the first time follow with intelligent appreciation the delivery of such a poem. To be sure, it had its obvious strong points and its sonorous charms; but, like all the later poems of the author, it is full of condensed thought and requires study. The reader to-day finds many passages whose force and beauty escaped him during the recital, yet the effect of the poem at the time was overpowering. The face of the poet, always singularly expressive, was on this occasion almost transfigured, — glowing, as if with an inward light. It was impossible to look away from it. Our age has furnished many great historic scenes, but this Commemoration combined the elements of grandeur and pathos, and produced an impression as lasting as life. (Underwood's *James Russell Lowell*, quoted in the *Riverside Literature Series*.)

The passage about Lincoln was not in the Ode as originally recited, but added immediately after. More than eighteen months before, however, I had written about Lincoln in the *North American Review*, — an article which pleased him. I did divine him earlier than most men of the Brahmin caste. The Ode itself was an improvisation. Two days before the Commemoration I had told my friend Child that it was impossible, — that I was dull as a door-mat. But the next day something gave me a jog and the whole thing came out of me with a rush. I sat up all night writing it out clear, and took it on the morning of the day to Child. 'I have something, but don't yet know what it is, or whether it will do. Look at it and tell

Bringing our robin's-leaf to deck their  
hearse

Who in warm life-blood wrote their nobler  
verse,

Our trivial song to honor those who  
come

With ears attuned to strenuous trump and  
drum,

And shaped in squadron-strophes their de-  
sire,

Live battle-odes whose lines were steel and  
fire: 10

Yet sometimes feathered words are  
strong,

A gracious memory to buoy up and save  
From Lethe's dreamless ooze, the common  
grave

Of the unventurous throng.

me.' He went a little way apart with it under an elm-tree in the college yard. He read a passage here and there, brought it back to me, and said, 'Do? I should think so! Don't you be scared.' And I was n't, but virtue enough had gone out of me to make me weak for a fortnight after. (LOWELL, in a letter to Richard Watson Gilder, January 16, 1886. *Letters*, Harper and Brothers, vol. ii, pp. 306-308.)

I don't know how to answer your queries about my 'Ode.' I guess I am right, for it was a matter of pure instinct — except the strophe you quote, which I added for balance both of measure and thought. I am not sure if I understand what you say about the tenth strophe. You will observe that it leads naturally to the eleventh, and that I there justify a certain narrowness in it as an expression of the popular feeling as well as my own. I confess I have never got over the feeling of wrath with which (just after the death of my nephew Willie) I read in an English paper that nothing was to be hoped of an army officered by tailors' apprentices and butcher-boys. The poem was written with a vehement speed, which I thought I had lost in the skirts of my professor's gown. Till within two days of the celebration I was hopelessly dumb, and then it all came with a rush, literally making me lean (*mi fece magro*) and so nervous that I was weeks in getting over it. I was longer in getting the new (eleventh) strophe to my mind than in writing the rest of the poem. In *that* I hardly changed a word, and it was so undeliberate that I did not find out till after it was printed that some of the verses lacked corresponding rhymes. All the 'War Poems' were improvisations as it were. My blood was up, and you would hardly believe me if I were to tell how few hours intervened between conception and completion, even in so long a one as 'Mason and Sildell.' So I have a kind of faith that the 'Ode' is right because it was *there*, I hardly knew how. I doubt you are right in wishing it more historical. But then I could not have written it. I had put the ethical and political view so often in prose that I was weary of it. The motives of the war? I had impatiently argued them again and again — but for an ode they must be in the blood and not the memory. (LOWELL, in a letter of December 8, 1868. *Letters*, Harper and Brothers, vol. ii, pp. 9-10.) See also Lowell's letter to Miss Norton, July 25, 1865; and Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. ii, pp. 1-73, especially 63-73.

For a noble description of the Commemoration procession and the exercises, see W. G. Brown's *The Fee of Compromise and other Essays*, pp. 197-199; quoted in Greenleaf's *Lowell*, pp. 161-163.

## II

To-day our Reverend Mother welcomes  
back

Her wisest Scholars, those who under-  
stood

The deeper teaching of her mystic tome,  
And offered their fresh lives to make it  
good:

No lore of Greece or Rome,  
No science peddling with the names of  
things, 20

Or reading stars to find inglorious fates,

Can lift our life with wings

Far from Death's idle gulf that for the  
many waits,

And lengthen out our dates

With that clear fame whose memory sings  
In manly hearts to come, and nerves them  
and dilates:

Nor such thy teaching, Mother of us all!

Not such the trumpet-call

Of thy diviner mood,

That could thy sons entice 30

From happy homes and toils, the fruitful  
nest

Of those half-virtues which the world calls  
best,

Into War's tumult rude;

But rather far that stern device

The sponsors chose that round thy cradle  
stood

In the dim, unventured wood,

The VERITAS that lurks beneath<sup>1</sup>

The letter's unprolific sheath,

Life of whate'er makes life worth living,

Seed-grain of high emprise, immortal food,

One heavenly thing whereof earth hath  
the giving. 41

## III

Many loved Truth, and lavished life's best  
oil

Amid the dust of books to find her,  
Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,  
With the cast mantle she hath left be-  
hind her.

Many in sad faith sought for her,  
Many with crossed hands sighed for  
her;

But these, our brothers, fought for her,  
At life's dear peril wrought for her,

So loved her that they died for her, 50

<sup>1</sup> VERITAS, the motto on the seal of Harvard University, inscribed upon three open books. See Holmes's poem 'Veritas,' p. 896.

Tasting the raptured fleetness

Of her divine completeness:

Their higher instinct knew

Those love her best who to themselves are  
true,

And what they dare to dream of, dare to  
do;

They followed her and found her

Where all may hope to find,

Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,

But beautiful, with danger's sweetness  
round her.

Where faith made whole with deed 60

Breathes its awakening breath

Into the lifeless creed,

They saw her plumed and mailed,

With sweet, stern face unveiled,

And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them  
in death.

## IV

Our slender life runs rippling by, and  
glides

Into the silent hollow of the past;

What is there that abides

To make the next age better for the  
last?

Is earth too poor to give us 70

Something to live for here that shall out-  
live us?

Some more substantial boon

Than such as flows and ebbs with Fortune's  
fickle moon?

The little that we see

From doubt is never free;

The little that we do

Is but half-nobly true;

With our laborious hiving

What men call treasure, and the gods call  
dross,

Life seems a jest of Fate's contriving, 80

Only secure in every one's conniving,

A long account of nothings paid with loss,  
Where we poor puppets, jerked by unseen  
wires,

After our little hour of strut and rave,

With all our pasteboard passions and de-  
sires,

Loves, hates, ambitions, and immortal fires,  
Are tossed pell-mell together in the  
grave.

But stay! no age was e'er degenerate,

Unless men held it at too cheap a rate,

For in our likeness still we shape our  
fate. 90

Ah, there is something here  
 Unfathomed by the cynic's sneer,  
 Something that gives our feeble light  
 A high immunity from Night,  
 Something that leaps life's narrow bars  
 To claim its birthright with the hosts of  
 heaven;  
 A seed of sunshine that can leaven  
 Our earthly dullness with the beams of  
 stars,  
 And glorify our clay  
 With light from fountains elder than the  
 Day; 100  
 A conscience more divine than we,  
 A gladness fed with secret tears,  
 A vexing, forward-reaching sense  
 Of some more noble permanence;  
 A light across the sea,  
 Which haunts the soul and will not let it  
 be,  
 Still beaconing from the heights of unde-  
 generate years.

## V

Whither leads the path  
 To ampler fates that leads?  
 Not down through flowery meads,  
 To reap an aftermath 111  
 Of youth's vainglorious weeds,  
 But up the steep, amid the wrath  
 And shock of deadly-hostile creeds,  
 Where the world's best hope and stay  
 By battle's flashes gropes a desperate  
 way,  
 And every turf the fierce foot clings to  
 bleeds.  
 Peace hath her not ignoble wreath,  
 Ere yet the sharp, decisive word  
 Light the black lips of cannon, and the  
 sword 120  
 Dreams in its easeful sheath;  
 But some day the live coal behind the  
 thought,  
 Whether from Baäl's stone obscene,  
 Or from the shrine serene  
 Of God's pure altar brought,  
 Bursts up in flame; the war of tongue and  
 pen  
 Learns with what deadly purpose it was  
 fraught,  
 And, helpless in the fiery passion caught,  
 Shakes all the pillared state with shock of  
 men:  
 Some day the soft Ideal that we wooed 130  
 Confronts us fiercely, foe-beset, pursued,

And cries reproachful: 'Was it, then, my  
 praise,  
 And not myself was loved? Prove now  
 thy truth;  
 I claim of thee the promise of thy youth;  
 Give me thy life, or cower in empty phrase,  
 The victim of thy genius, not its mate!'  
 Life may be given in many ways,  
 And loyalty to Truth be sealed  
 As bravely in the closet as the field,  
 So bountiful is Fate; 140  
 But then to stand beside her,  
 When craven churls deride her,  
 To front a lie in arms and not to yield,  
 This shows, methinks, God's plan  
 And measure of a stalwart man,  
 Limbed like the old heroic breeds,  
 Who stands self-poised on manhood's  
 solid earth,  
 Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,  
 Fed from within with all the strength he  
 needs.

## VI

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief, 150  
 Whom late the Nation he had led,  
 With ashes on her head,  
 Wept with the passion of an angry grief:  
 Forgive me, if from present things I  
 turn  
 To speak what in my heart will beat and  
 burn,  
 And hang my wreath on his world-honored  
 urn.  
 Nature, they say, doth dote,  
 And cannot make a man  
 Save on some worn-out plan,  
 Repeating us by rote: 160  
 For him her Old-World moulds aside she  
 threw,  
 And choosing sweet clay from the  
 breast  
 Of the unexhausted West,  
 With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,  
 Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and  
 true.  
 How beautiful to see  
 Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,  
 Who loved his charge, but never loved to  
 lead;  
 One whose meek flock the people joyed to  
 be,  
 Not lured by any cheat of birth, 170  
 But by his clear-grained human worth,  
 And brave old wisdom of sincerity!



They knew that outward grace is dust;  
 They could not choose but trust  
 In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,  
 And supple-tempered will  
 That bent like perfect steel to spring again  
 and thrust.

His was no lonely mountain-peak of  
 mind,  
 Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy  
 bars,  
 A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors  
 blind; 180  
 Broad prairie rather, genial, level-  
 lined,  
 Fruitful and friendly for all human  
 kind,  
 Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of lofti-  
 est stars.

Nothing of Europe here,  
 Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,  
 Ere any names of Serf and Peer  
 Could Nature's equal scheme deface  
 And thwart her genial will;  
 Here was a type of the true elder race,  
 And one of Plutarch's men talked with us  
 face to face. 190

I praise him not; it were too late;  
 And some innate weakness there must be  
 In him who condescends to victory  
 Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,  
 Safe in himself as in a fate.

So always firmly he:  
 He knew to bide his time,  
 And can his fame abide,  
 Still patient in his simple faith sublime,  
 Till the wise years decide. 200  
 Great captains, with their guns and  
 drums,  
 Disturb our judgment for the hour,  
 But at last silence comes;  
 These all are gone, and, standing like a  
 tower,  
 Our children shall behold his fame.  
 The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing  
 man,  
 Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not  
 blame,  
 New birth of our new soil, the first Amer-  
 ican.

## VII

Long as man's hope insatiate can discern  
 Or only guess some more inspiring  
 goal 210  
 Outside of Self, enduring as the pole,

Along whose course the flying axles burn  
 Of spirits bravely-pitched, earth's man-  
 lier brood;

Long as below we cannot find  
 The meed that stills the inexorable mind;  
 So long this faith to some ideal Good,  
 Under whatever mortal names it masks,  
 Freedom, Law, Country, this ethereal  
 mood

That thanks the Fates for their severer  
 tasks,

Feeling its challenged pulses leap, 220  
 While others skulk in subterfuges cheap,  
 And, set in Danger's van, has all the boon  
 it asks,

Shall win man's praise and woman's love,  
 Shall be a wisdom that we set above  
 All other skills and gifts to culture dear,  
 A virtue round whose forehead we in-  
 wreath

Laurels that with a living passion breathe  
 When other crowns grow, while we twine  
 them, sear.

What brings us thronging these high rites  
 to pay,

And seal these hours the noblest of our year,  
 Save that our brothers found this better  
 way ? 231

## VIII

We sit here in the Promised Land  
 That flows with Freedom's honey and  
 milk;

But 't was they won it, sword in hand,  
 Making the nettle danger soft for us as silk.  
 We welcome back our bravest and our  
 best;—

Ah me ! not all ! some come not with the  
 rest,  
 Who went forth brave and bright as any  
 here !

I strive to mix some gladness with my strain,  
 But the sad strings complain, 240  
 And will not please the ear:

I sweep them for a pæan, but they wane  
 Again and yet again

Into a dirge, and die away, in pain.  
 In these brave ranks I only see the gaps,  
 Thinking of dear ones whom the dumb  
 turf wraps,

Dark to the triumph which they died to gain:

Fitlier may others greet the living,  
 For me the past is unforgiving;  
 I with uncovered head 250  
 Salute the sacred dead,



Who went, and who return not. — Say not  
so!

'Tis not the grapes of Canaan that repay,  
But the high faith that failed not by the  
way;

Virtue treads paths that end not in the  
grave;

No ban of endless night exiles the brave;  
And to the saner mind

We rather seem the dead that stayed be-  
hind.

Blow, trumpets, all your exultations blow!  
For never shall their aureoled presence lack:  
I see them muster in a gleaming row, 261  
With ever-youthful brows that nobler show;  
We find in our dull road their shining  
track;

In every nobler mood  
We feel the orient of their spirit glow,  
Part of our life's unalterable good,  
Of all our saintlier aspiration;

They come transfigured back,  
Secure from change in their high-hearted  
ways,  
Beautiful evermore, and with the rays 270  
Of morn on their white Shields of Expecta-  
tion!

## IX

But is there hope to save  
Even this ethereal essence from the  
grave?

What ever 'scaped Oblivion's subtle  
wrong  
Save a few clarion names, or golden threads  
of song?

Before my musing eye  
The mighty ones of old sweep by,  
Disvoicèd now and insubstantial things,  
As noisy once as we; poor ghosts of kings,  
Shadows of empire wholly gone to dust,  
And many races, nameless long ago, 281  
To darkness driven by that imperious  
gust  
Of ever-rushing Time that here doth  
blow:

O visionary world, condition strange,  
Where naught abiding is but only Change,  
Where the deep-bolted stars themselves  
still shift and range!

Shall we to more continuance make pre-  
tence?  
Renown builds tombs; a life-estate is Wit;  
And, bit by bit,  
The cunning years steal all from us but woe;

Leaves are we, whose decays no harvest  
sow. 291

But, when we vanish hence,  
Shall they lie forceless in the dark be-  
low,

Save to make green their little length  
of sods,

Or deepen pansies for a year or two,  
Who now to us are shining-sweet as  
gods?

Was dying all they had the skill to do?  
That were not fruitless: but the Soul  
resents

Such short-lived service, as if blind  
events

Ruled without her, or earth could so  
endure; 300

She claims a more divine investiture  
Of longer tenure than Fame's airy rents;  
Whate'er she touches doth her nature  
share;

Her inspiration haunts the ennobled air,  
Gives eyes to mountains blind,  
Ears to the deaf earth, voices to the  
wind,

And her clear trump sings succor every-  
where

By lonely bivouacs to the wakeful mind;  
For soul inherits all that soul could dare:

Yea, Manhood hath a wider span  
And larger privilege of life than man. 311  
The single deed, the private sacrifice,  
So radiant now through proudly-hidden  
tears,

Is covered up erelong from mortal eyes  
With thoughtless drift of the deciduous  
years;

But that high privilege that makes all  
men peers,

That leap of heart whereby a people rise  
Up to a noble anger's height,

And, flamed on by the Fates, not shrink,  
but grow more bright,

That swift validity in noble veins, 320  
Of choosing danger and disdaining  
shame,

Of being set on flame  
By the pure fire that flies all contact  
base

But wraps its chosen with angelic might,

These are imperishable gains,  
Sure as the sun, medicinal as light,  
These hold great futures in their lusty  
reins

And certify to earth a new imperial race.

## X

Who now shall sneer ?  
 Who dare again to say we trace 330  
 Our lines to a plebeian race ?  
 Roundhead and Cavalier !  
**D**umb are those names erewhile in battle  
 loud;  
**D**ream-footed as the shadow of a cloud,  
 They flit across the ear:  
**T**hat is best blood, that hath most iron  
 in 't,  
**T**o edge resolve with, pouring without stint  
 For what makes manhood dear.  
 Tell us not of Plantagenets,  
**H**apsburgs, and Guelfs, whose thin bloods  
 crawl 340  
**D**own from some victor in a border-brawl !  
 How poor their outworn coronets,  
**M**atched with one leaf of that plain civic  
 wreath  
**O**ur brave for honor's blazon shall be-  
 queath,  
 Through whose desert a rescued Nation  
 sets  
**H**er heel on treason, and the trumpet hears  
 Shout victory, tingling Europe's sullen ears  
 With vain resentments and more vain  
 regrets !

## XI

Not in anger, not in pride,  
 Pure from passion's mixture rude 350  
 Ever to base earth allied,  
 But with far-heard gratitude,  
 Still with heart and voice renewed,  
 To heroes living and dear martyrs dead,  
 The strain should close that consecrates  
 our brave.  
**L**ift the heart and lift the head !  
 Lofty be its mood and grave,  
 Not without a martial ring,  
 Not without a prouder tread  
 And a peal of exultation: 360  
 Little right has he to sing  
 Through whose heart in such an hour  
 Beats no march of conscious power,  
 Sweeps no tumult of elation !  
 'T is no Man we celebrate,  
 By his country's victories great,  
 A hero half, and half the whim of Fate,  
 But the pith and marrow of a Nation  
 Drawing force from all her men,  
 Highest, humblest, weakest, all, 370  
 For her time of need, and then  
 Pulsing it again through them,

Till the basest can no longer cower,  
 Feeling his soul spring up divinely tall,  
 Touched but in passing by her mantle-  
 hem.  
 Come back, then, noble pride, for 't is  
 her dower !  
 How could poet ever tower,  
 If his passions, hopes, and fears,  
 If his triumphs and his tears,  
 Kept not measure with his people ? 380  
**B**oom, cannon, boom to all the winds and  
 waves !  
**C**lash out, glad bells, from every rocking  
 steeple !  
**B**anners, adance with triumph, bend your  
 staves !  
 And from every mountain-peak  
 Let beacon-fire to answering beacon  
 speak,  
 Katahdin tell Monadnock, Whiteface  
 he,  
 And so leap on in light from sea to sea,  
 Till the glad news be sent  
 Across a kindling continent,  
 Making earth feel more firm and air breathe  
 braver: 390  
 ' Be proud ! for she is saved, and all have  
 helped to save her !  
 She that lifts up the manhood of the  
 poor,  
 She of the open soul and open door,  
 With room about her hearth for all  
 mankind !  
 The fire is dreadful in her eyes no  
 more;  
 From her bold front the helm she doth  
 unbind,  
 Sends all her handmaid armies back to  
 spin,  
 And bids her navies, that so lately  
 hurled  
 Their crashing battle, hold their thun-  
 ders in,  
 Swimming like birds of calm along the  
 unharmed shore. 400  
 No challenge sends she to the elder  
 world,  
 That looked askance and hated; a light  
 scorn  
 Plays o'er her mouth, as round her  
 mighty knees  
 She calls her children back, and waits  
 the morn  
 Of nobler day, enthroned between her sub-  
 ject seas.'

## XII

Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found  
release !

Thy God, in these distempered days,  
Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of  
His ways,  
And through thine enemies hath wrought  
thy peace !

Bow down in prayer and praise ! 410  
No poorest in thy borders but may now  
Lift to the juster skies a man's enfran-  
chised brow.

O Beautiful ! my country ! ours once  
more !

Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair  
O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,  
And letting thy set lips,

Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,  
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,  
What words divine of lover or of poet  
Could tell our love and make thee know it,  
Among the Nations bright beyond com-  
pare ? 421

What were our lives without thee ?  
What all our lives to save thee ?  
We reck not what we gave thee ;  
We will not dare to doubt thee,  
But ask whatever else, and we will dare !  
1865. 1865.

## THE MINER

Down 'mid the tangled roots of things  
That coil about the central fire,  
I seek for that which giveth wings  
To stoop, not soar, to my desire.

Sometimes I hear, as 't were a sigh,  
The sea's deep yearning far above,  
'Thou hast the secret not,' I cry,  
'In deeper deeps is hid my Love.'

They think I burrow from the sun,  
In darkness, all alone, and weak ; 10  
Such loss were gain if He were won,  
For 't is the sun's own Sun I seek.

'The earth,' they murmur, 'is the tomb  
That vainly sought his life to prison ;  
Why grovel longer in the gloom ?  
He is not here ; he hath arisen.'

More life for me where he hath lain  
Hidden while ye believed him dead,

Than in cathedrals cold and vain,  
Built on loose sands of *It is said*. 2

My search is for the living gold ;  
Him I desire who dwells recluse,  
And not his image worn and old,  
Day-servant of our sordid use.

If him I find not, yet I find  
The ancient joy of cell and church,  
The glimpse, the surety undefined,  
The unquenched ardor of the search.

Happier to chase a flying goal  
Than to sit counting laurelled gains,  
To guess the Soul within the soul 31  
Than to be lord of what remains.

Hide still, best Good, in subtile wise,  
Beyond my nature's utmost scope ;  
Be ever absent from mine eyes  
To be twice present in my hope !  
1865.

TO H. W. L.<sup>1</sup>

ON HIS BIRTHDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1867

I NEED not praise the sweetness of his song,  
Where limpid verse to limpid verse suc-  
ceeds

Smooth as our Charles, when, fearing lest  
he wrong  
The new moon's mirrored skiff, he slides  
along,  
Full without noise, and whispers in his  
reeds.

With loving breath of all the winds his  
name  
Is blown about the world, but to his  
friends  
A sweeter secret hides behind his fame,  
And Love steals shyly through the loud  
acclaim  
To murmur a *God bless you !* and there  
ends. 10

<sup>1</sup> See Lowell's letter sent with these verses, Febru-  
ary 27, 1867, in the *Letters*, vol. i, pp. 378, 379. In this  
letter a stanza was added to the poem : —

A gift of symbol-flowers I meant to bring,  
White for thy candor, for thy kindness red ;  
But Nature here denies them to the Spring,  
And in forced blooms an odorous warmth will cling  
Not artless : take this bunch of verse instead.

(*Life of Longfellow*, vol. iii, p. 84.)

As I muse backward up the checkered years  
Wherein so much was given, so much was  
lost,

Blessings in both kinds, such as cheapen  
tears, —

But hush ! this is not for profaner ears;  
Let them drink molten pearls nor dream  
the cost.

Some suck up poison from a sorrow's core,  
As naught but nightshade grew upon  
earth's ground;

Love turned all his to heart's-ease, and the  
more

Fate tried his bastions, she but forced a door  
Leading to sweeter manhood and more  
sound. 20

Even as a wind-waved fountain's swaying  
shade

Seems of mixed race, a gray wraith shot  
with sun,

So through his trial faith translucent rayed  
Till darkness, half disnatured so, betrayed  
A heart of sunshine that would fain o'er-  
run.

Surely if skill in song the shears may stay  
And of its purpose cheat the charmed  
abyss,

If our poor life be lengthened by a lay,  
He shall not go, although his presence may,  
And the next age in praise shall double  
this. 30

Long days be his, and each as lusty-sweet  
As gracious natures find his song to be;  
May Age steal on with softly-cadenced feet  
Falling in music, as for him were meet  
Whose choicest verse is harsher-toned  
than he !

1867.

### THE NIGHTINGALE IN THE STUDY<sup>1</sup>

'Come forth !' my catbird calls to me,  
'And hear me sing a cavatina

<sup>1</sup> I have not felt in the mood to do much during my imprisonment. One little poem I have written, 'The Nightingale in the Study.' . . . 'T is a dialogue between my catbird and me — he calling me out of doors, I giving my better reasons for staying within. Of course my nightingale is Calderon. (LOWELL, in a letter to Professor C. E. Norton, July 8, 1867. *Lowell's Letters*, Harper and Brothers, vol. i, p. 390.)

That, in this old familiar tree,  
Shall hang a garden of Alcina.

'These buttercups shall brim with wine  
Beyond all Lesbian juice or Massic;  
May not New England be divine ?  
My ode to ripening summer classic ?

'Or, if to me you will not hark,  
By Beaver Brook a thrush is ringing 10  
Till all the alder-coverts dark  
Seem sunshine-dappled with his singing.

'Come out beneath the unmastered sky,  
With its emancipating spaces,  
And learn to sing as well as I,  
Without premeditated graces.

'What boot your many-volumed gains,  
Those withered leaves forever turning,  
To win, at best, for all your pains,  
A nature mummy-wrapt in learning ? 20

'The leaves wherein true wisdom lies  
On living trees the sun are drinking;  
Those white clouds, drowsing through the  
skies,  
Grew not so beautiful by thinking.

'“Come out !” with me the oriole cries,  
Escape the demon that pursues you !  
And, hark, the cuckoo weatherwise,  
Still hiding farther onward, woos you.'

'Alas, dear friend, that, all my days,  
Hast poured from that syringa thicket 30  
The quaintly discontinuous lays  
To which I hold a season-ticket,

'A season-ticket cheaply bought  
With a dessert of pilfered berries,  
And who so oft my soul hast caught  
With morn and evening voluntaries,

'Deem me not faithless, if all day  
Among my dusty books I linger,  
No pipe, like thee, for June to play  
With fancy-led, half-conscious finger. 40

'A bird is singing in my brain  
And bubbling o'er with mingled fancies,  
Gay, tragic, rapt, right heart of Spain  
Fed with the sap of old romances.

'I ask no ampler skies than those  
His magic music rears above me,

No falser friends, no truer foes, —  
And does not Doña Clara love me?

'Cloaked shapes, a twanging of guitars,  
A rush of feet, and rapiers clashing, 50  
Then silence deep with breathless stars,  
And overhead a white hand flashing.

'O music of all moods and climes,  
Vengeful, forgiving, sensuous, saintly,  
Where still, between the Christian chimes,  
The Moorish cymbal tinkles faintly!

'O life borne lightly in the hand,  
For friend or foe with grace Castilian!  
O valley safe in Fancy's land,  
Not tramped to mud yet by the million!

'Bird of to-day, thy songs are stale 60  
To his, my singer of all weathers,  
My Calderon, my nightingale,  
My Arab soul in Spanish feathers.

'Ah, friend, these singers dead so long,  
And still, God knows, in purgatory,  
Give its best sweetness to all song,  
To Nature's self her better glory.'

1867.

1867.

### AN EMBER PICTURE

How strange are the freaks of memory!  
The lessons of life we forget,  
While a trifle, a trick of color,  
In the wonderful web is set, —

Set by some mordant of fancy,  
And, spite of the wear and tear  
Of time or distance or trouble,  
Insists on its right to be there.

A chance had brought us together;  
Our talk was of matters-of-course; 10  
We were nothing, one to the other,  
But a short half-hour's resource.

We spoke of French acting and actors,  
And their easy, natural way:  
Of the weather, for it was raining  
As we drove home from the play.

We debated the social nothings  
We bore ourselves so to discuss;  
The thunderous rumors of battle  
Were silent the while for us. 20

Arrived at her door, we left her  
With a drippingly hurried adieu,  
And our wheels went crunching the gravel  
Of the oak-darkened avenue.

As we drove away through the shadow,  
The candle she held in the door  
From rain-varnished tree-trunk to tree-  
trunk  
Flashed fainter, and flashed no more;—

Flashed fainter, then wholly faded  
Before we had passed the wood; 30  
But the light of the face behind it  
Went with me and stayed for good.

The vision of scarce a moment,  
And hardly marked at the time,  
It comes unbidden to haunt me,  
Like a scrap of ballad-rhyme.

Had she beauty? Well, not what they call 40  
so;

You may find a thousand as fair;  
And yet there's her face in my memory  
With no special claim to be there. 40

As I sit sometimes in the twilight,  
And call back to life in the coals  
Old faces and hopes and fancies  
Long buried (good rest to their souls!),

Her face shines out in the embers;  
I see her holding the light,  
And hear the crunch of the gravel  
And the sweep of the rain that night.

'Tis a face that can never grow older,  
That never can part with its gleam, 50  
'Tis a gracious possession forever,  
For is it not all a dream?

1867.

### IN THE TWILIGHT

MEN say the sullen instrument,  
That, from the Master's bow,  
With pangs of joy or woe,  
Feels music's soul through every fibre sent  
Whispers the ravished strings  
More than he knew or meant;  
Old summers in its memory glow;  
The secrets of the wind it sings;  
It hears the April-loosened springs;

And mixes with its mood  
All it dreamed when it stood  
In the murmurous pine-wood  
Long ago !

The magical moonlight then  
Steeped every bough and cone;  
The roar of the brook in the glen  
Came dim from the distance blown;  
The wind through its glooms sang low,  
And it swayed to and fro  
With delight as it stood,  
In the wonderful wood,  
Long ago !

O my life, have we not had seasons  
That only said, Live and rejoice ?  
That asked not for causes and reasons,  
But made us all feeling and voice ?  
When we went with the winds in their  
blowing,  
When Nature and we were peers,  
And we seemed to share in the flowing  
Of the inexhaustible years ?  
Have we not from the earth drawn juices  
Too fine for earth's sordid uses ?  
Have I heard, have I seen  
All I feel, all I know ?  
Doth my heart overween ?  
Or could it have been  
Long ago ?

Sometimes a breath floats by me,  
An odor from Dreamland sent,  
That makes the ghost seem nigh me  
Of a splendor that came and went,  
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not  
In what diviner sphere,  
Of memories that stay not and go not,  
Like music heard once by an ear  
That cannot forget or reclaim it,  
A something so shy, it would shame it  
To make it a show,  
A something too vague, could I name it,  
For others to know,  
As if I had lived it or dreamed it,  
As if I had acted or schemed it,  
Long ago !

And yet, could I live it over,  
This life that stirs in my brain,  
Could I be both maiden and lover,  
Moon and tide, bee and clover,  
As I seem to have been, once again,  
Could I but speak it and show it,

This pleasure more sharp than pain, 60  
That baffles and lures me so,  
The world should once more have a poet,  
Such as it had  
In the ages glad,  
Long ago !

1868.

## FOR AN AUTOGRAPH

THOUGH old the thought and oft exprest,  
'Tis his at last who says it best, —  
I'll try my fortune with the rest.

Life is a leaf of paper white  
Whereon each one of us may write  
His word or two, and then comes night.

'Lo, time and space enough,' we cry,  
'To write an epic !' so we try  
Our nibs upon the edge, and die.

Muse not which way the pen to hold,  
Luck hates the slow and loves the bold,  
Soon come the darkness and the cold.

Greatly begin ! though thou have time  
But for a line, be that sublime, —  
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

Ah, with what lofty hope we came !  
But we forget it, dream of fame,  
And scrawl, as I do here, a name.

(1868.)

## THE FOOT-PATH

It mounts athwart the windy hill  
Through sallow slopes of upland bare,  
And Fancy climbs with foot-fall still  
Its narrowing curves that end in air.

By day, a warmer-hearted blue  
Stoops softly to that topmost swell;  
Its thread-like windings seem a clue  
To gracious climes where all is well.

By night, far yonder, I surmise  
An ampler world than clips my ken, 10  
Where the great stars of happier skies  
Commingle nobler fates of men.

I look and long, then haste me home,  
Still master of my secret rare;

Once tried, the path would end in Rome,  
But now it leads me everywhere.

Forever to the new it guides,  
From former good, old overmuch;  
What Nature for her poets hides,  
'T is wiser to divine than clutch. 30

The bird I list hath never come  
Within the scope of mortal ear;  
My prying step would make him dumb,  
And the fair tree, his shelter, sear.

Behind the hill, behind the sky,  
Behind my inmost thought, he sings;  
No feet avail; to hear it nigh,  
The song itself must lend the wings.

Sing on, sweet bird close hid, and raise  
Those angel stairways in my brain, 30  
That climb from these low-vaulted days  
To spacious sunshines far from pain.

Sing when thou wilt, enchantment fleet,  
I leave thy covert haunt untrod,  
And envy Science not her feat  
To make a twice-told tale of God.

They said the fairies tript no more,  
And long ago that Pan was dead;  
'T was but that fools preferred to bore  
Earth's rind inch-deep for truth instead.

Pan leaps and pipes all summer long, 41  
The fairies dance each full-mooned night,  
Would we but doff our lenses strong,  
And trust our wiser eyes' delight.

City of Elf-land, just without  
Our seeing, marvel ever new,  
Glimpsed in fair weather, a sweet doubt  
Sketched-in, mirage-like, on the blue,

I build thee in yon sunset cloud,  
Whose edge allures to climb the height;  
I hear thy drowned bells, inly-loud, 51  
From still pools dusk with dreams of  
night.

Thy gates are shut to hardest will,  
Thy countersign of long-lost speech, —  
Those fountained courts, those chambers  
still,  
Fronting Time's far East, who shall  
reach?

I know not, and will never pry,  
But trust our human heart for all;  
Wonders that from the seeker fly  
Into an open sense may fall. 60

Hide in thine own soul, and surprise  
The password of the unwary elves;  
Seek it, thou canst not bribe their spies;  
Unsought, they whisper it themselves. 1868.

### ALADDIN

WHEN I was a beggarly boy,  
And lived in a cellar damp,  
I had not a friend nor a toy,  
But I had Aladdin's lamp;  
When I could not sleep for the cold,  
I had fire enough in my brain,  
And builded, with roofs of gold,  
My beautiful castles in Spain!

Since then I have toiled day and night,  
I have money and power good store,  
But I'd give all my lamps of silver bright  
For the one that is mine no more;  
Take, Fortune, whatever you choose,  
You gave, and may snatch again;  
I have nothing 't would pain me to lose,  
For I own no more castles in Spain! 1853, 1868.

### TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON<sup>1</sup>

#### AGRO DOLCE

THE wind is roistering out of doors,  
My windows shake and my chimney roars;  
My Elmwood chimneys seem crooning to  
me,  
As of old, in their moody, minor key,  
And out of the past the hoarse wind blows,  
As I sit in my arm-chair, and toast my toes

'Ho! ho! nine-and-forty,' they seem to  
sing,

'We saw you a little toddling thing.  
We knew you child and youth and man,  
A wonderful fellow to dream and plan, 10  
With a great thing always to come, — who  
knows?

Well, well! 'tis some comfort to toast  
one's toes.

<sup>1</sup> Written as dedication of the volume *Under the Willows and other Poems*.



' How many times have you sat at gaze  
Till the mouldering fire forgot to blaze,  
Shaping among the whimsical coals  
Fancies and figures and shining goals !  
What matters the ashes that cover those ?  
While hickory lasts you can toast your toes.

' O dream-ship-builder ! where are they all,  
Your grand three-deckers, deep-chested  
and tall, 20  
That should crush the waves under canvas  
piles,  
And anchor at last by the Fortunate Isles ?  
There's gray in your beard, the years turn  
foes,  
While you muse in your arm-chair, and  
toast your toes.'

I sit and dream that I hear, as of yore,  
My Elmwood chimneys' deep-throated  
roar;  
If much be gone, there is much remains;  
By the embers of loss I count my gains,  
You and yours with the best, till the old  
hope glows  
In the fanciful flame, as I toast my toes. 30

Instead of a fleet of broad-browed ships,  
To send a child's armada of chips !  
Instead of the great guns, tier on tier,  
A freight of pebbles and grass-blades  
sere !

' Well, maybe more love with the less gift  
goes,'  
I growl, as, half moody, I toast my toes.  
1868. 1868.

AGASSIZ<sup>1</sup>

Come  
Dicesti egli ebbe ? non viv' egli ancora ?  
Non fiere gli occhi suoi lo dolce lome ?

I

I

THE electric nerve, whose instantaneous  
thrill  
Makes next-door gossips of the antipodes,

<sup>1</sup> See Lowell's letters to Professor Charles Elliot Norton, February 2, and February 26, 1874, especially the second letter. Lowell was in Florence when Agassiz died. 'His death,' he says, 'came home to me in a singular way, growing into my consciousness from day to day as if it were a graft new-set, that by degrees became part of my own wood and drew a greater share of my sap than belonged to it, as grafts sometimes will.' (*Lowell's Letters*, Harper and Brothers, vol. ii, pp. 115-116.) See also the references in note on p. 211.

Confutes poor Hope's last fallacy of ease, —  
The distance that divided her from ill:  
Earth sentient seems again as when of old  
The horny foot of Pan  
Stamped, and the conscious horror ran  
Beneath men's feet through all her fibres  
cold:

Space's blue walls are mined; we feel the  
throe  
From underground of our night-mantled  
foe : 10

The flame-winged feet  
Of Trade's new Mercury, that dry-shod run  
Through briny abysses dreamless of the  
sun,

Are mercilessly fleet,  
And at a bound annihilate  
Ocean's prerogative of short reprieve;  
Surely ill news might wait,  
And man be patient of delay to grieve:  
Letters have sympathies  
And tell-tale faces that reveal, 20  
To senses finer than the eyes,  
Their errand's purport ere we break the  
seal;

They wind a sorrow round with circum-  
stance  
To stay its feet, nor all unwarned displace  
The veil that darkened from our sidelong  
glance

The inexorable face:  
But now Fate stuns as with a mace;  
The savage of the skies, that men have  
caught  
And some scant use of language  
taught,

Tells only what he must, — 30  
The steel-cold fact in one laconic thrust.

2

So thought I, as, with vague, mechanic eyes,  
I scanned the festering news we half de-  
spise

Yet scramble for no less,  
And read of public scandal, private fraud,  
Crime flaunting scot-free while the mob  
applaud,

Office made vile to bribe unworthiness,  
And all the unwholesome mess  
The Land of Honest Abraham serves of  
late

To teach the Old World how to wait,  
When suddenly, 41  
As happens if the brain, from overweight  
Of blood, infect the eye,

Three tiny words grew lurid as I read,  
 And reeled commingling: *Agassiz is dead*.  
 As when, beneath the street's familiar jar,  
 An earthquake's alien omen rumbles far,  
 Men listen and forebode, I hung my head,  
     And strove the present to recall,  
 As if the blow that stunned were yet to  
     fall. 50

## 3

Uprooted is our mountain oak,  
 That promised long security of shade  
 And brooding-place for many a winged  
     thought;  
 Not by Time's softly-cadenced stroke  
 With pauses of relenting pity stayed,  
 But ere a root seemed sapt, a bough de-  
     cayed,  
 From sudden ambush by the whirlwind  
     caught  
 And in his broad maturity betrayed !

## 4

Well might I, as of old, appeal to you,  
     O mountains, woods, and streams, 60  
 To help us mourn him, for ye loved him  
     too;  
 But simpler moods befit our modern  
     themes,  
 And no less perfect birth of nature can,  
 Though they yearn tow'rd him, sympathize  
     with man,  
 Save as dumb fellow-prisoners through a  
     wall;  
 Answer ye rather to my call,  
 Strong poets of a more unconscious day,  
 When Nature spake nor sought nice rea-  
     sons why,  
 Too much for softer arts forgotten since  
 That teach our forthright tongue to lisp  
     and mince, 70  
 And drown in music the heart's bitter cry !  
 Lead me some steps in your directer way,  
 Teach me those words that strike a solid  
     root  
     Within the ears of men;  
 Ye chiefly, virile both to think and feel,  
 Deep-chested Chapman and firm-footed  
     Ben,  
 For he was masculine from head to heel.  
 Nay, let himself stand undiminished by  
 With those clear parts of him that will not  
     die.  
 Himself from out the recent dark I claim  
 To hear, and, if I flatter him, to blame; 81

To show himself, as still I seem to see,  
 A mortal, built upon the antique plan,  
 Brimful of lusty blood as ever ran,  
 And taking life as simply as a tree !  
 To claim my foiled good-by let him ap-  
     pear,  
 Large-limbed and human as I saw him  
     near,  
 Loosed from the stiffening uniform of  
     fame:  
 And let me treat him largely: I should fear  
 (If with too prying lens I chanced to err,  
 Mistaking catalogue for character), 91  
 His wise forefinger raised in smiling blame.  
 Nor would I scant him with judicial  
     breath  
 And turn mere critic in an epitaph;  
 I choose the wheat, incurious of the chaff  
 That swells fame living, chokes it after  
     death,  
 And would but memorize the shining half  
 Of his large nature that was turned to me:  
 Fain had I joined with those that honored  
     him  
 With eyes that darkened because his were  
     dim, 100  
 And now been silent: but it might not be.

## II

## I

In some the genius is a thing apart,  
 A pillared hermit of the brain,  
 Hoarding with incommunicable art  
     Its intellectual gain;  
 Man's web of circumstance and fate  
 They from their perch of self observe,  
 Indifferent as the figures on a slate  
 Are to the planet's sun-swung curve  
 Whose bright returns they calculate;  
 Their nice adjustment, part to part,  
 Were shaken from its serviceable mood 112  
 By unpremeditated stirs of heart  
     Or jar of human neighborhood:  
 Some find their natural selves, and only  
     then,  
 In furloughs of divine escape from men,  
 And when, by that brief ecstasy left bare,  
     Driven by some instinct of desire,  
 They wander worldward, 't is to blink and  
     stare,  
 Like wild things of the wood about a fire,  
 Dazed by the social glow they cannot  
     share; 121

His nature brooked no lonely lair,  
But basked and bourgeoned in copartnery,  
Companionship, and open-windowed glee:

He knew, for he had tried,  
Those speculative heights that lure  
The unpractised foot, impatient of a guide,  
Tow'd ether too attenuately pure  
For sweet unconscious breath, though dear  
to pride,

But better loved the foothold sure 130  
Of paths that wind by old abodes of men  
Who hope at last the churchyard's peace  
secure,  
And follow time-worn rules, that them  
suffice,  
Learned from their sires, traditionally wise,  
Careful of honest custom's how and when;  
His mind, too brave to look on Truth  
askance,  
No more those habitudes of faith could  
share,  
But, tinged with sweetness of the old Swiss  
manse,  
Lingered around them still and fain would  
spare.

Patient to spy a sullen egg for weeks, 140  
The enigma of creation to surprise,  
His truer instinct sought the life that  
speaks

Without a mystery from kindly eyes;  
In no self-spun cocoon of prudence wound,  
He by the touch of men was best inspired,  
And caught his native greatness at rebound  
From generousities itself had fired;  
Then how the heat through every fibre ran,  
Felt in the gathering presence of the man,  
While the apt word and gesture came un-  
bid ! 150

Virtues and faults it to one metal wrought,  
Fined all his blood to thought,  
And ran the molten man in all he said or  
did.

All Tully's rules and all Quintilian's too  
He by the light of listening faces knew,  
And his rapt audience all unconscious lent  
Their own roused force to make him elo-  
quent;

Persuasion fondled in his look and tone;  
Our speech (with strangers prudish) he  
could bring  
To find new charm in accents not her own;  
Her coy constraints and icy hindrances 161  
Melted upon his lips to natural ease,  
As a brook's fetters swell the dance of  
spring.

Nor yet all sweetness: not in vain he wore,  
Nor in the sheath of ceremony, controlled  
By velvet courtesy or caution cold,  
That sword of honest anger prized of old,  
But, with two-handed wrath,  
If baseness or pretension crossed his path,  
Struck once nor needed to strike more.

2

His magic was not far to seek, — 171  
He was so human ! Whether strong or  
weak,  
Far from his kind he neither sank nor  
soared,  
But sate an equal guest at every board:  
No beggar ever felt him condescend,  
No prince presume; for still himself he bare  
At manhood's simple level, and where'er  
He met a stranger, there he left a friend.  
How large an aspect ! nobly unsevere,  
With freshness round him of Olympian  
cheer, 180  
Like visits of those earthly gods he came;  
His look, wherever its good-fortune fell,  
Doubled the feast without a miracle,  
And on the hearthstone danced a happier  
flame;  
Philemon's crabbed vintage grew benign;  
Amphitryon's gold-juice humanized to wine.

III

I

The garrulous memories  
Gather again from all their far-flown  
nooks,  
Singly at first, and then by twos and threes,  
Then in a throng innumerable, as the rooks  
Thicken their twilight files 191  
Tow'd Tintern's gray repose of roofless  
aisles:

Once more I see him at the table's head  
When Saturday her monthly banquet  
spread

To scholars, poets, wits,  
All choice, some famous, loving things, not  
names,

And so without a twinge at others' fames;  
Such company as wisest moods befits,  
Yet with no pedant blindness to the worth  
Of undeliberate mirth, 200  
Natures benignly mixed of air and earth,  
Now with the stars and now with equal zest  
Tracing the eccentric orbit of a jest.

2

I see in vision the warm-lighted hall,  
 The living and the dead I see again,  
 And but my chair is empty; 'mid them all  
 'T is I that seem the dead: they all remain  
 Immortal, changeless creatures of the brain:  
 Wellnigh I doubt which world is real  
     most,  
 Of sense or spirit, to the truly sane; 210  
 In this abstraction it were light to deem  
 Myself the figment of some stronger  
     dream;  
 They are the real things, and I the ghost  
 That glide unhindered through the solid  
     door,  
 Vainly for recognition seek from chair to  
     chair,  
 And strive to speak and am but futile air,  
 As truly most of us are little more.

3

Him most I see whom we most dearly miss,  
     The latest parted thence,  
 His features poised in genial armistice 220  
 And armed neutrality of self-defence  
 Beneath the forehead's walled preëminence,  
 While Tyro, plucking facts with careless  
     reach,  
 Settles off-hand our human how and  
     whence;  
 The long-trained veteran scarcely wincing  
     hears  
 The infallible strategy of volunteers  
 Making through Nature's walls its easy  
     breach,  
 And seems to learn where he alone could  
     teach.  
 Ample and ruddy, the board's end he fills  
 As he our fireside were, our light and  
     heat, 230  
 Centre where minds diverse and various  
     skills  
 Find their warm nook and stretch unham-  
     pered feet;  
 I see the firm benignity of face,  
 Wide-smiling champaign, without tameness  
     sweet,  
 The mass Teutonic toned to Gallic grace,  
 The eyes whose sunshine runs before the  
     lips  
 While Holmes's rockets curve their long  
     ellipse,  
 And burst in seeds of fire that burst  
     again  
     To drop in scintillating rain.

4

There too the face half-rustic, half-divine,  
 Self-poised, sagacious, freaked with hu-  
     mor fine, 241  
 Of him who taught us not to mow and  
     mope  
 About our fancied selves, but seek our  
     scoop  
 In Nature's world and Man's, nor fade to  
     hollow trope,  
 Content with our New World and timely  
     bold  
 To challenge the o'ermastery of the Old;  
 Listening with eyes averse I see him sit  
 Pricked with the cider of the Judge's wit  
 (Ripe-hearted homebrew, fresh and fresh  
     again),  
 While the wise nose's firm-built aquiline  
     Curves sharper to restrain 251  
 The merriment whose most unruly moods  
 Pass not the dumb laugh learned in lis-  
     tening woods  
     Of silence-shedding pine:  
 Hard by is he whose art's consoling spell  
 Hath given both worlds a whiff of aspho-  
     del,  
 His look still vernal 'mid the wintry ring  
 Of petals that remember, not foretell,  
 The paler primrose of a second spring.

5

And more there are: but other forms  
     arise 260  
 And seen as clear, albeit with dimmer  
     eyes:  
 First he from sympathy still held apart  
 By shrinking over-eagerness of heart,  
 Cloud charged with searching fire, whose  
     shadow's sweep  
 Heightened mean things with sense of  
     brooding ill,  
 And steeped in doom familiar field and  
     hill,—  
 New England's poet, soul reserved and  
     deep,  
 November nature with a name of May,  
 Whom high o'er Concord plains we laid  
     to sleep,  
 While the orchards mocked us in their  
     white array 270  
 And building robins wondered at our  
     tears,  
 Snatched in his prime, the shape august  
 That should have stood unbent 'neath  
     fourscore years,

**The noble head, the eyes of furtive trust,**  
 All gone to speechless dust.  
 And he our passing guest,<sup>1</sup>  
**Shy nature, too, and stung with life's**  
 unrest,  
**Whom we too briefly had but could not**  
 hold,  
**Who brought ripe Oxford's culture to**  
 our board,  
 The Past's incalculable hoard, 280  
**Mellowed by scutcheoned panes in clois-**  
 ters old,  
**Seclusions, ivy-hushed, and pavements**  
 sweet  
**With immemorial lisp of musing feet;**  
**Young head time-tonsured smoother than**  
 a friar's,  
**Boy face, but grave with answerless de-**  
 sires,  
**Poet in all that poets have of best,**  
**But foiled with riddles dark and cloudy**  
 aims,  
 Who now hath found sure rest,  
 Not by still Isis or historic Thames,  
 Nor by the Charles he tried to love with  
 me, 290  
**But, not misplaced, by Arno's hallowed**  
 brim,  
**Nor scorned by Santa Croce's neighbor-**  
 ing fames,  
 Haply not mindless, wheresoe'er he  
 be,  
**Of violets that to-day I scattered over**  
 him.<sup>2</sup>  
 He, too, is there,<sup>3</sup>  
**After the good centurion fitly named,**  
**Whom learning dulled not, nor conven-**  
 tion tamed,  
**Shaking with burly mirth his hyacinthine**  
 hair,  
**Our hearty Grecian of Homeric ways,**  
**Still found the surer friend where least he**  
 hoped the praise. 300

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Hugh Clough, who lived in Cambridge from 1852 to 1853. Lowell speaks of him in the 'Introduction' to the *Biglow Papers*, 1866, as among those whose opinion and encouragement he most valued: 'With a feeling too tender and grateful to be mixed with any vanity, I mention as one of these the late A. H. Clough, who more than any one of those I have known (no longer living), except Hawthorne, impressed me with the constant presence of that indefinable thing we call genius.'

<sup>2</sup> Clough's grave is in the little Protestant Cemetery at Florence, near that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and not far from Walter Savage Landor's.

<sup>3</sup> Cornelius C. Felton. See Longfellow's 'Three Friends of Mine.'

6

Yea truly, as the sallying years  
 Fall from us faster, like frost-loosened  
 leaves  
 Pushed by the misty touch of shortening  
 days,  
 And that unawakened winter nears,  
 'T is the void chair our surest guest re-  
 ceives,  
 'T is lips long cold that give the warm-  
 est kiss,  
 'T is the lost voice comes oftenest to our  
 ears;  
 We count our rosary by the beads we  
 miss:  
 To me, at least, it seemeth so,  
 An exile in the land once found divine, 310  
 While my starved fire burns low,  
 And homeless winds at the loose case-  
 ment whine  
 Shrill ditties of the snow-roofed Apen-  
 nine.

IV

I

Now forth into the darkness all are gone,  
 But memory, still unsated, follows on,  
 Retracing step by step our homeward walk,  
 With many a laugh among our serious  
 talk,  
 Across the bridge where, on the dimpling  
 tide,  
 The long red streamers from the windows  
 glide,  
 Or the dim western moon 320  
 Rocks her skiff's image on the broad lagoon,  
 And Boston shows a soft Venetian side  
 In that Arcadian light when roof and tree,  
 Hard prose by daylight, dream in Italy;  
 Or haply in the sky's cold chambers wide  
 Shivered the winter stars, while all below,  
 As if an end were come of human ill,  
 The world was wrapt in innocence of snow  
 And the cast-iron bay was blind and still;  
 These were our poetry; in him perhaps 330  
 Science had barred the gate that lets in  
 dream,  
 And he would rather count the perch and  
 bream  
 Than with the current's idle fancy lapse;  
 And yet he had the poet's open eye  
 That takes a frank delight in all it sees,  
 Nor was earth voiceless, nor the mystic  
 sky,

To him the life-long friend of fields and trees:

Then came the prose of the suburban street,  
Its silence deepened by our echoing feet,  
And converse such as rambling hazard finds; 340

Then he who many cities knew and many minds,  
And men once world-noised, now mere Ossian forms

Of misty memory, bade them live anew  
As when they shared earth's manifold delight,

In shape, in gait, in voice, in gesture true,  
And, with an accent heightening as he warms,

Would stop forgetful of the shortening night,

Drop my confining arm, and pour profuse  
Much worldly wisdom kept for others' use,

Not for his own, for he was rash and free, 350  
His purse or knowledge all men's, like the sea.

Still can I hear his voice's shrilling might  
(With pauses broken, while the fitful spark  
He blew more hotly rounded on the dark  
To hint his features with a Rembrandt light)

Call Oken back, or Humboldt, or Lamarck,  
Or Cuvier's taller shade, and many more  
Whom he had seen, or knew from others' sight,

And make them men to me as ne'er before:

Not seldom, as the undeadened fibre stirred  
Of noble friendships knit beyond the sea, 361  
German or French thrust by the lagging word,

For a good leash of mother-tongues had he.

At last, arrived at where our paths divide,  
'Good night!' and, ere the distance grew too wide,

'Good night!' again; and now with cheated ear

I half hear his who mine shall never hear.

2

Sometimes it seemed as if New England air

For his large lungs too parsimonious were,

As if those empty rooms of dogma drear 370

Where the ghost shivers of a faith austere  
Counting the horns o'er of the Beast,  
Still scaring those whose faith in it is least,

As if those snaps o' th' moral atmosphere  
That sharpen all the needles of the East,  
Had been to him like death,  
Accustomed to draw Europe's freer breath

In a more stable element;  
Nay, even our landscape, half the year morose,

Our practical horizon grimly pent, 380  
Our air, sincere of ceremonious haze,  
Forcing hard outlines mercilessly close,  
Our social monotone of level days,

Might make our best seem banishment;  
But it was nothing so;

Haply his instinct might divine,  
Beneath our drift of puritanic snow,  
The marvel sensitive and fine  
Of sanguinaria over-rash to blow  
And trust its shyness to an air malign; 390  
Well might he prize truth's warranty and pledge

In the grim outcrop of our granite edge,  
Or Hebrew fervor flashing forth at need  
In the gaunt sons of Calvin's iron breed,  
As prompt to give as skilled to win and keep;

But, though such intuitions might not cheer,

Yet life was good to him, and, there or here,

With that sufficing joy, the day was never cheap;

Thereto his mind was its own ample sphere,

And, like those buildings great that through the year 400

Carry one temperature, his nature large  
Made its own climate, nor could any marge

Traced by convention stay him from his bent:

He had a habitude of mountain air;  
He brought wide outlook where he went,  
And could on sunny uplands dwell

Of prospect sweeter than the pastures fair

High-hung of viny Neufchâtel;

Nor, surely, did he miss

Some pale, imaginary bliss 410  
Of earlier sights whose inner landscape still  
was Swiss.



## V

## I

I cannot think he wished so soon to die  
 With all his senses full of eager heat,  
 And rosy years that stood expectant by  
 To buckle the winged sandals on their  
 feet,  
 He that was friends with Earth, and  
 all her sweet  
 Took with both hands unsparingly:  
 Truly this life is precious to the root,  
 And good the feel of grass beneath the  
 foot;  
 To lie in buttercups and clover-bloom, 420  
 Tenants in common with the bees,  
 And watch the white clouds drift through  
 gulfs of trees,  
 Is better than long waiting in the tomb;  
 Only once more to feel the coming spring  
 As the birds feel it, when it bids them  
 sing,  
 Only once more to see the moon  
 Through leaf-fringed abbey-arches of the  
 elms  
 Curve her mild sickle in the West  
 Sweet with the breath of hay-cocks, were  
 a boon  
 Worth any promise of soothsayer  
 realms 430  
 Or casual hope of being elsewhere blest;  
 To take December by the beard  
 And crush the creaking snow with springy  
 foot,  
 While overhead the North's dumb stream-  
 ers shoot,  
 Till Winter fawn upon the cheek en-  
 deared,  
 Then the long evening-ends  
 Lingered by cosy chimney-nooks,  
 With high companionship of books  
 Or slippered talk of friends  
 And sweet habitual looks, 440  
 Is better than to stop the ears with dust:  
 Too soon the spectre comes to say, 'Thou  
 must!'

## 2

When toil-crooked hands are crost upon  
 the breast,  
 They comfort us with sense of rest;  
 They must be glad to lie forever still;  
 Their work is ended with their day;  
 Another fills their room; 't is the World's  
 ancient way,

Whether for good or ill;  
 But the deft spinners of the brain,  
 Who love each added day and find it  
 gain, 450  
 Them overtakes the doom  
 To snap the half-grown flower upon the  
 loom  
 (Trophy that was to be of life-long pain),  
 The thread no other skill can ever knit  
 again.

'T was so with him, for he was glad to  
 live,  
 'T was doubly so, for he left work begun;  
 Could not this eagerness of Fate forgive  
 Till all the allotted flax were spun?  
 It matters not; for, go at night or noon,  
 A friend, whene'er he dies, has died too  
 soon, 460  
 And, once we hear the hopeless *He is*  
*dead,*  
 So far as flesh hath knowledge, all is  
 said.

## VI

## I

I seem to see the black procession go:  
 That crawling prose of death too well I  
 know,  
 The vulgar paraphrase of glorious woe;  
 I see it wind through that unsightly  
 grove,  
 Once beautiful, but long defaced  
 With granite permanence of cockney  
 taste  
 And all those grim disfigurements we  
 love:  
 There, then, we leave him: Him? such  
 costly waste 470  
 Nature rebels at: and it is not true  
 Of those most precious parts of him we  
 knew:  
 Could we be conscious but as dreamers be,  
 'T were sweet to leave this shifting life  
 of tents  
 Sunk in the changeless calm of Deity;  
 Nay, to be mingled with the elements,  
 The fellow-servant of creative powers,  
 Partaker in the solemn year's events,  
 To share the work of busy-fingered  
 hours,  
 To be night's silent almoner of dew, 480  
 To rise again in plants and breathe and  
 grow,



To stream as tides the ocean caverns  
 through,  
 Or with the rapture of great winds to  
 blow  
 About earth's shaken coignes, were not a  
 fate  
 To leave us all-disconsolate;  
 Even endless slumber in the sweetening  
 sod  
 Of charitable earth  
 That takes out all our mortal stains,  
 And makes us cleaner neighbors of the  
 clod,  
 Methinks were better worth 490  
 Than the poor fruit of most men's wake-  
 ful pains,  
 The heart's insatiable ache:  
 But such was not his faith,  
 Nor mine: it may be he had trod  
 Outside the plain old path of *God thus*  
*spake*,  
 But God to him was very God,  
 And not a visionary wraith  
 Skulking in murky corners of the mind,  
 And he was sure to be 499  
 Somehow, somewhere, imperishable as He,  
 Not with His essence mystically combined,  
 As some high spirits long, but whole and  
 free,  
 A perfected and conscious Agassiz.  
 And such I figure him: the wise of old  
 Welcome and own him of their peaceful  
 fold,  
 Not truly with the guild enrolled  
 Of him who seeking inward guessed  
 Diviner riddles than the rest,  
 And groping in the darks of thought  
 Touched the Great Hand and knew it  
 not; 510  
 Rather he shares the daily light,  
 From reason's charier fountains won,  
 Of his great chief, the slow-paced Stagy-  
 rite,  
 And Cuvier clasps once more his long-lost  
 son.

2

The shape erect is prone: forever stilled  
 The winning tongue; the forehead's high-  
 piled heap,  
 A cairn which every science helped to  
 build,  
 Unvalued will its golden secrets keep:  
 He knows at last if Life or Death be  
 best:

Wherever he be flown, whatever vest 520  
 The being hath put on which lately here  
 So many-friended was, so full of cheer  
 To make men feel the Seeker's noble zest,  
 We have not lost him all; he is not gone  
 To the dumb herd of them that wholly  
 die;  
 The beauty of his better self lives on  
 In minds he touched with fire, in many an  
 eye  
 He trained to Truth's exact severity;  
 He was a Teacher: why be grieved for  
 him 529  
 Whose living word still stimulates the  
 air?  
 In endless file shall loving scholars come  
 The glow of his transmitted touch to share,  
 And trace his features with an eye less  
 dim  
 Than ours whose sense familiar wont  
 makes numb.

1874.

1874.

SONNET<sup>1</sup>

## SCOTTISH BORDER

As sinks the sun behind yon alien hills  
 Whose heather-purpled slopes, in glory  
 rolled,  
 Flush all my thought with momentary  
 gold,  
 What pang of vague regret my fancy  
 thrills?  
 Here 'tis enchanted ground the peasant  
 tills,  
 Where the shy ballad dared its blooms un-  
 fold,  
 And memory's glamour makes new sights  
 seem old,  
 As when our life some vanished dream  
 fulfils.  
 Yet not to thee belong these painless tears,  
 Land loved ere seen: before my darkened  
 eyes,  
 From far beyond the waters and the years,  
 Horizons mute that wait their poet rise;  
 The stream before me fades and disap-  
 pears,  
 And in the Charles the western splendor  
 dies.

1873.

<sup>1</sup> See Lowell's letter to Howells, March 21, 1875.  
*Letters*, vol. II, p. 137.

## THREE MEMORIAL POEMS

*' Coesistenza fusca  
O della propria o dell' altrui vergogna  
Pur sentirà la tua parola brusca.*

If I let fall a word of bitter mirth<sup>1</sup>  
When public shames more shameful pardon won,  
Some have misjudged me, and my service done,  
If small, yet faithful, deemed of little worth:  
Through veins that drew their life from Western earth  
Two hundred years and more my blood hath run  
In no polluted course from sire to son;  
And thus was I predestined ere my birth  
To love the soil wherewith my fibres own  
Instinctive sympathies; yet love it so  
As honor would, nor lightly to dethrone  
Judgment, the stamp of manhood, nor forego  
The son's right to a mother dearer grown  
With growing knowledge and more chaste than snow.

ODE<sup>2</sup>

READ AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE FIGHT AT CONCORD  
BRIDGE

19TH APRIL, 1875

## I

WHO cometh over the hills,  
Her garments with morning sweet,  
The dance of a thousand rills  
Making music before her feet?  
Her presence freshens the air;  
Sunshine steals light from her face;  
The leaden footstep of Care  
Leaps to the tune of her pace,  
Fairness of all that is fair,  
Grace at the heart of all grace,  
Sweetener of hut and of hall,  
Bringer of life out of naught,  
Freedom, oh, fairest of all  
The daughters of Time and Thought!

## II

She cometh, cometh to-day:  
Hark! hear ye not her tread,  
Sending a thrill through your clay,  
Under the sod there, ye dead,  
Her nurslings and champions?  
Do ye not hear, as she comes,  
The bay of the deep-mouthed guns,  
The gathering rote of the drums?

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the lines in the second stanza of Lowell's 'Agassiz,' which were written in 1874, when the political corruption of that time was being revealed and in many cases condoned,—lines which were at the time severely criticised as 'unpatriotic.'

<sup>2</sup> See Lowell's letter to James B. Thayer, January 14, 1877. *Letters*, vol. ii, pp. 188-191.

The bells that called ye to prayer,  
How wildly they clamor on her,  
Crying, 'She cometh! prepare  
Her to praise and her to honor,  
That a hundred years ago  
Scattered here in blood and tears  
Potent seeds wherefrom should grow  
Gladness for a hundred years!'

30

## III

Tell me, young men, have ye seen  
Creature of diviner mien  
For true hearts to long and cry for,  
Manly hearts to live and die for?  
What hath she that others want?  
Brows that all endearments haunt,  
Eyes that make it sweet to dare,  
Smiles that cheer untimely death,  
Looks that fortify despair,  
Tones more brave than trumpet's breath;  
Tell me, maidens, have ye known  
Household charm more sweetly rare,  
Grace of woman ampler blown,  
Modesty more debonair,  
Younger heart with wit full grown?  
Oh for an hour of my prime,  
The pulse of my hotter years,  
That I might praise her in rhyme  
Would tingle your eyelids to tears,  
Our sweetness, our strength, and our star,  
Our hope, our joy, and our trust,  
Who lifted us out of the dust,  
And made us whatever we are!

41

51

## IV

Whiter than moonshine upon snow  
Her raiment is, but round the hem

Crimson stained; and, as to and fro  
 Her sandals flash, we see on them,  
 And on her instep veined with blue,  
 Flecks of crimson, on those fair feet,  
 High-arched, Diana-like, and fleet, 60  
 Fit for no grosser stain than dew:  
 Oh, call them rather christs than stains,  
 Sacred and from heroic veins!  
 For, in the glory-guarded pass,  
 Her haughty and far-shining head  
 She bowed to shrive Leonidas  
 With his imperishable dead;  
 Her, too, Morgarten saw,  
 Where the Swiss lion fleshed his icy paw;  
 She followed Cromwell's quenchless star  
 Where the grim Puritan tread 71  
 Shook Marston, Naseby, and Dunbar:  
 Yea, on her feet are dearer dyes  
 Yet fresh, not looked on with untearful  
 eyes.

## V

Our fathers found her in the woods  
 Where Nature meditates and broods,  
 The seeds of unexampled things  
 Which Time to consummation brings  
 Through life and death and man's unstable  
 moods;  
 They met her here, not recognized, 80  
 A sylvan huntress clothed in furs,  
 To whose chaste wants her bow sufficed,  
 Nor dreamed what destinies were hers:  
 She taught them bee-like to create  
 Their simpler forms of Church and State;  
 She taught them to endure  
 The past with other functions than it knew,  
 And turn in channels strange the uncertain  
 stream of Fate;  
 Better than all, she fenced them in their  
 need  
 With iron-handed Duty's sternest creed, 90  
 'Gainst Self's lean wolf that ravens word  
 and deed.

## VI

Why cometh she hither to-day  
 To this low village of the plain  
 Far from the Present's loud highway,  
 From Trade's cool heart and seething  
 brain?  
 Why cometh she? She was not far away.  
 Since the soul touched it, not in vain,  
 With pathos of immortal gain,  
 'Tis here her fondest memories stay.  
 She loves yon pine-bemurmured ridge 100

Where now our broad-browed poet sleeps,  
 Dear to both Englands; near him he  
 Who wore the ring of Canace;  
 But most her heart to rapture leaps  
 Where stood that era-parting bridge,  
 O'er which, with footfall still as dew,  
 The Old Time passed into the New;  
 Where, as your stealthy river creeps,  
 He whispers to his listening weeds  
 Tales of sublimest homespun deeds. 110  
 Here English law and English thought  
 'Gainst the self-will of England fought;  
 And here were men (coequal with their  
 fate),  
 Who did great things, unconscious they  
 were great.  
 They dreamed not what a die was cast  
 With that first answering shot; what then?  
 There was their duty; they were men  
 Schooled the soul's inward gospel to obey,  
 Though leading to the lion's den.  
 They felt the habit-hallowed world give  
 way 120  
 Beneath their lives, and on went they,  
 Unhappy who was last.  
 When Buttrick gave the word,  
 That awful idol of the unchallenged Past,  
 Strong in their love, and in their lineage  
 strong,  
 Fell crashing: if they heard it not,  
 Yet the earth heard,  
 Nor ever hath forgot,  
 As on from startled throne to throne,  
 Where Superstition sate or conscious  
 Wrong, 130  
 A shudder ran of some dread birth un-  
 known.  
 Thrice venerable spot!  
 River more fateful than the Rubicon!  
 O'er those red planks, to snatch her diadem,  
 Man's Hope, star-girdled, sprang with  
 them,  
 And over ways untried the feet of Doom  
 strode on.

## VII

Think you these felt no charms  
 In their gray homesteads and embowered  
 farms?  
 In household faces waiting at the door  
 Their evening step should lighten up no  
 more? 140  
 In fields their boyish feet had known?  
 In trees their fathers' hands had set,  
 And which with them had grown,

**W**idening each year their leafy coronet?  
**F**elt they no pang of passionate regret  
**F**or those unsolid goods that seem so much  
 our own?

**T**hese things are dear to every man that  
 lives,

**A**nd life prized more for what it lends than  
 gives.

**Y**ea, many a tie, through iteration sweet,  
**S**trove to detain their fatal feet; 150

**A**nd yet the enduring half they chose,  
**W**hose choice decides a man life's slave or  
 king,

**T**he invisible things of God before the seen  
 and known:

**T**herefore their memory inspiration blows  
**W**ith echoes gathering on from zone to  
 zone;

**F**or manhood is the one immortal thing  
**B**eneath Time's changeful sky,  
**A**nd, where it lightened once, from age to  
 age,

**M**en come to learn, in grateful pilgrimage,  
**T**hat length of days is knowing when to  
 die. 160

## VIII

**W**hat marvellous change of things and  
 men!

**S**he, a world-wandering orphan then,  
**S**o mighty now! Those are her streams  
**T**hat whirl the myriad, myriad wheels  
**O**f all that does, and all that dreams,  
**O**f all that thinks, and all that feels,  
**T**hrough spaces stretched from sea to sea;  
**B**y idle tongues and busy brains,  
**B**y who doth right, and who refrains,  
**H**ers are our losses and our gains; 170  
**O**ur maker and our victim she.

## IX

**M**aiden half mortal, half divine,  
**W**e triumphed in thy coming; to the brinks  
**O**ur hearts were filled with pride's tumultu-  
 nous wine;

**B**etter to-day who rather feels than thinks.  
**Y**et will some graver thoughts intrude,  
**A**nd cares of sterner mood;  
**T**hey won thee: who shall keep thee? From  
 the deeps

**W**here discrowned empires o'er their ruins  
 brood,

**A**nd many a thwarted hope wrings its weak  
 hands and weeps, 180

**I** hear the voice as of a mighty wind

From all heaven's caverns rushing uncon-  
 fined,

'I, Freedom, dwell with Knowledge: I  
 abide

With men whom dust of faction cannot  
 blind

To the slow tracings of the Eternal Mind;  
 With men by culture trained and fortified,  
 Who bitter duty to sweet lusts prefer,  
 Fearless to counsel and obey.

Conscience my sceptre is, and law my  
 sword,

Not to be drawn in passion or in play, 190  
 But terrible to punish and deter;

Implacable as God's word,  
 Like it, a shepherd's crook to them that  
 blindly err.

Your firm-pulsed sires, my martyrs and my  
 saints,

Offshoots of that one stock whose patient  
 sense

Hath known to mingle flux with perma-  
 nence,

Rated my chaste denials and restraints  
 Above the moment's dear-paid paradise:  
 Beware lest, shifting with Time's gradual  
 creep,

The light that guided shine into your  
 eyes. 200

The envious Powers of ill nor wink nor  
 sleep:

Be therefore timely wise,  
 Nor laugh when this one steals, and that  
 one lies,

As if your luck could cheat those sleepless  
 spies,

Till the deaf Fury comes your house to  
 sweep!

I hear the voice, and unaffrighted bow;  
 Ye shall not be prophetic now,  
 Heralds of ill, that darkening fly  
 Between my vision and the rainbowed sky,  
 Or on the left your hoarse forebodings  
 croak 210

From many a blasted bough  
 On Yggdrasil's storm-sinewed oak,  
 That once was green, Hope of the West, as  
 thou:

Yet pardon if I tremble while I boast;  
 For I have loved as those who pardon most.

## X

Away, ungrateful doubt, away!  
 At least she is our own to-day.  
 Break into rapture, my song,

Verses, leap forth in the sun,  
 Bearing the joyance along 220  
 Like a train of fire as ye run!  
 Pause not for choosing of words,  
 Let them but blossom and sing  
 Blithe as the orchards and birds  
 With the new coming of spring!  
 Dance in your jollity, bells;  
 Shout, cannon; cease not, ye drums;  
 Answer, ye hillside and dells;  
 Bow, all ye people! She comes, 230  
 Radiant, calm-fronted, as when  
 She hallowed that April day.  
 Stay with us! Yes, thou shalt stay,  
 Softener and strengthener of men,  
 Freedom, not won by the vain,  
 Not to be courted in play,  
 Not to be kept without pain.  
 Stay with us! Yes, thou wilt stay,  
 Handmaid and mistress of all,  
 Kindler of deed and of thought,  
 Thou that to hut and to hall 240  
 Equal deliverance brought!  
 Souls of her martyrs, draw near,  
 Touch our dull lips with your fire,  
 That we may praise without fear  
 Her our delight, our desire,  
 Our faith's inextinguishable star,  
 Our hope, our remembrance, our trust,  
 Our present, our past, our to be,  
 Who will mingle her life with our dust  
 And makes us deserve to be free! 250

1875.

1875.

### UNDER THE OLD ELM<sup>1</sup>

POEM READ AT CAMBRIDGE ON THE  
 HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF WASH-  
 INGTON'S TAKING COMMAND OF THE  
 AMERICAN ARMY, 3D JULY, 1775

I

I

WORDS pass as wind, but where great  
 deeds were done  
 A power abides transfused from sire to  
 son:

<sup>1</sup> I think the 'Old Elm' the best of the three [memorial poems], mainly because it was composed after my college duties were over, though even in that I was distracted by the intervention of the Commencement dinner. (LOWELL, letter of January 14, 1877.)

We, too, here in my birthplace, having found out

The boy feels deeper meanings thrill his  
 ear,  
 That tingling through his pulse life-long  
 shall run,  
 With sure impulsion to keep honor clear.  
 When, pointing down, his father whispers  
 'Here,  
 Here, where we stand, stood he, the purely  
 great,  
 Whose soul no siren passion could un-  
 sphere,  
 Then nameless, now a power and mixed  
 with fate.'  
 Historic town, thou holdest sacred dust, 20  
 Once known to men as pious, learned,  
 just,  
 And one memorial pile that dares to  
 last;  
 But Memory greets with reverential kiss  
 No spot in all thy circuit sweet as this,  
 Touched by that modest glory as it past,  
 O'er which yon elm hath piously displayed  
 These hundred years its monumental shade.

2

Of our swift passage through this scenery  
 Of life and death, more durable than we,  
 What landmark so congenial as a tree 30  
 Repeating its green legend every spring,  
 And, with a yearly ring,  
 Recording the fair seasons as they flee,  
 Type of our brief but still-renewed mortal-  
 ity?  
 We fall as leaves: the immortal trunk re-  
 mains,  
 Builded with costly juice of hearts and  
 brains  
 Gone to the mould now, whither all that  
 be  
 Vanish returnless, yet are procreant still  
 In human lives to come of good or ill,  
 And feed unseen the roots of Destiny. 35

that something happened here a hundred years ago must have our centennial; and, since my friend and townsman Dr. Holmes could n't be had, I felt bound to do the poetry for the day. We have still standing the elm under which Washington took command of the *American* (till then *provincial*) army, and under which also Whitefield had preached some thirty years before. I took advantage of the occasion to hold out a hand of kindly reconciliation to Virginia. I could do it with the profounder feeling, that no family lost more than mine by the Civil War. Three nephews (the hope of our race) were killed in one or other of the Virginia battles, and three cousins on other of those bloody fields. (LOWELL, letter of July 6, 1875. Quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper & Brothers.)

See also the letters of October 16, 1875, and February 22, 1877.

## II

## I

Men's monuments, grown old, forget their  
names

They should eternize, but the place  
Where shining souls have passed imbibes a  
grace

Beyond mere earth; some sweetness of  
their fames

Leaves in the soil its unextinguished trace,  
Pungent, pathetic, sad with nobler aims,  
That penetrates our lives and heightens  
them or shames.

This insubstantial world and fleet  
Seems solid for a moment when we stand  
On dust ennobled by heroic feet 40  
Once mighty to sustain a tottering land,  
And mighty still such burthen to upbear,  
Nor doomed to tread the path of things  
that merely were:

Our sense, refined with virtue of the spot,  
Across the mists of Lethe's sleepy stream  
Recalls him, the sole chief without a blot,  
No more a pallid image and a dream,  
But as he dwelt with men decorously su-  
preme.

## 2

Our grosser minds need this terrestrial  
hint

To raise long-buried days from tombs of  
print: 50

'Here stood he,' softly we repeat,  
And lo, the statue shrined and still  
In that gray minster-front we call the Past,  
Feels in its frozen veins our pulses thrill,  
Breathes living air and mocks at Death's  
deceit.

It warms, it stirs, comes down to us at last,  
Its features human with familiar light,  
A man, beyond the historian's art to kill,  
Or sculptor's to efface with patient chisel-  
blight.

## 3

Sure the dumb earth hath memory, nor for  
naught 60

Was Fancy given, on whose enchanted loom  
Present and Past commingle, fruit and  
bloom

Of one fair bough, inseparably wrought  
Into the seamless tapestry of thought.  
So charmed, with undeluded eye we see  
In history's fragmentary tale

Bright clues of continuity,  
Learn that high natures over Time prevail,  
And feel ourselves a link in that entail  
That binds all ages past with all that are  
to be. 70

## III

## I

Beneath our consecrated elm  
A century ago he stood,  
Famed vaguely for that old fight in the  
wood

Whose red surge sought, but could not  
overwhelm

The life foredoomed to wield our rough-  
hewn helm:<sup>1</sup> —

From colleges, where now the gown  
To arms had yielded,<sup>2</sup> from the town,  
Our rude self-summoned levies flocked to  
see

The new-come chiefs and wonder which  
was he.

No need to question long; close-lipped and  
tall, 80

Long trained in murder-brooding forests  
lone

To bridle others' clamors and his own,  
Firmly erect, he towered above them all,  
The incarnate discipline that was to free  
With iron curb that armed democracy.

## 2

A motley rout was that which came to  
stare,

In raiment tanned by years of sun and  
storm,

Of every shape that was not uniform,  
Dotted with regimentals here and there;

An army all of captains, used to pray 90  
And stiff in fight, but serious drill's despair,

Skilled to debate their orders, not obey;  
Deacons were there, selectmen, men of note

In half-tamed hamlets ambushed round  
with woods,

Ready to settle Freewill by a vote,

<sup>1</sup> After the defeat of Braddock, Washington wrote to his brother: 'By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet I escaped unhurt, although death was levelling my companions on every side of me.' (Quoted in the *Riverside Literature Series*.)

<sup>2</sup> Harvard, Hollis, and Massachusetts Halls were used as barracks, and the President's house was for a time Washington's headquarters.

But largely liberal to its private moods;  
 Prompt to assert by manners, voice, or pen,  
 Or ruder arms, their rights as Englishmen,  
 Nor much fastidious as to how and when:  
 Yet seasoned stuff and fittest to create 100  
 A thought-staid army or a lasting state:  
 Haughty they said he was, at first; severe;  
 But owned, as all men own, the steady hand  
 Upon the bridle, patient to command,  
 Prized, as all prize, the justice pure from  
 fear,  
 And learned to honor first, then love him,  
 then revere.  
 Such power there is in clear-eyed self-  
 restraint  
 And purpose clean as light from every  
 selfish taint.

## 3

Musing beneath the legendary tree,  
 The years between furl off: I seem to see 110  
 The sun-flecks, shaken the stirred foliage  
 through,  
 Dapple with gold his sober buff and blue  
 And weave prophetic aureoles round the  
 head  
 That shines our beacon now nor darkens  
 with the dead.  
 O man of silent mood,  
 A stranger among strangers then,  
 How art thou since renowned the Great,  
 the Good,  
 Familiar as the day in all the homes of men!  
 The winged years, that winnow praise to  
 blame,  
 Blow many names out: they but fan and  
 flame 120  
 The self-renewing splendors of thy fame.

## IV

## I

How many subtlest influences unite,  
 With spiritual touch of joy or pain,  
 Invisible as air and soft as light,  
 To body forth that image of the brain  
 We call our Country, visionary shape,  
 Loved more than woman, fuller of fire than  
 wine,  
 Whose charm can none define,  
 Nor any, though he flee it, can escape! 120  
 All party-colored threads the weaver Time  
 Sets in his web, now trivial, now sublime,  
 All memories, all forebodings, hopes and  
 fears,

Mountain and river, forest, prairie, sea,  
 A hill, a rock, a homestead, field, or tree,  
 The casual gleanings of unreckoned years,  
 Take goddess-shape at last and there is She,  
 Old at our birth, new as the springing  
 hours,  
 Shrine of our weakness, fortress of our  
 powers,  
 Consoler, kindler, peerless 'mid her peers,  
 A force that 'neath our conscious being  
 stirs, 140  
 A life to give ours permanence, when we  
 Are borne to mingle our poor earth with  
 hers,  
 And all this glowing world goes with us on  
 our biers.

## 2

Nations are long results, by ruder ways  
 Gathering the might that warrants length  
 of days;  
 They may be pieced of half-reluctant  
 shares  
 Welded by hammer-strokes of broad-  
 brained kings,  
 Or from a doughty people grow, the heirs  
 Of wise traditions widening cautious rings;  
 At best they are computable things, 150  
 A strength behind us making us feel bold  
 In right, or, as may chance, in wrong;  
 Whose force by figures may be summed  
 and told,  
 So many soldiers, ships, and dollars strong,  
 And we but drops that bear compulsory  
 part  
 In the dumb throb of a mechanic heart;  
 But Country is a shape of each man's  
 mind  
 Sacred from definition, unconfined  
 By the cramped walls where daily drudger-  
 ies grind;  
 An inward vision, yet an outward birth 160  
 Of sweet familiar heaven and earth;  
 A brooding Presence that stirs motions  
 blind  
 Of wings within our embryo being's shell  
 That wait but her completer spell  
 To make us eagle-natured, fit to dare  
 Life's nobler spaces and untarnished air.

## 3

You, who hold dear this self-conceived  
 ideal,  
 Whose faith and works alone can make it  
 real,



Bring all your fairest gifts to deck her  
shrine

Who lifts our lives away from Thine and  
Mine

And feeds the lamp of manhood more di-  
vine

With fragrant oils of quenchless constancy.  
When all have done their utmost, surely he  
Hath given the best who gives a character  
Erect and constant, which nor any shock  
Of loosened elements, nor the forceful sea  
Of flowing or of ebbing fates, can stir  
From its deep bases in the living rock  
Of ancient manhood's sweet security:

And this he gave, serenely far from pride  
As baseness, boon with prosperous stars  
allied,

Part of what nobler seed shall in our loins  
abide.

## 4

No bond of men as common pride so  
strong,

In names time-filtered for the lips of song,  
Still operant, with the primal Forces bound  
Whose currents, on their spiritual round,  
Transfuse our mortal will nor are gainsaid:  
These are their arsenals, these the exhaust-  
less mines

That give a constant heart in great de-  
signs;

These are the stuff whereof such dreams  
are made

As make heroic men: thus surely he  
Still holds in place the massy blocks he  
laid

'Neath our new frame, enforcing soberly  
The self-control that makes and keeps a  
people free.

## v

## i

Oh, for a drop of that Cornelian ink  
Which gave Agricola dateless length of  
days,

To celebrate him fitly, neither swerve  
To phrase unkempt, nor pass discretion's  
brink,

With him so statue-like in sad reserve,  
So diffident to claim, so forward to de-  
serve!

Nor need I shun due influence of his fame  
Who, mortal among mortals, seemed as  
now

The equestrian shape with unimpassioned  
brow,  
That paces silent on through vistas of ac-  
claim.

## 2

What figure more immovably august  
Than that grave strength so patient and so  
pure,  
Calm in good fortune, when it wavered,  
sure,

That mind serene, impenetrably just,  
Modelled on classic lines so simple they  
endure?

That soul so softly radiant and so white  
The track it left seems less of fire than  
light,

Cold but to such as love distemperature?  
And if pure light, as some deem, be the  
force

That drives rejoicing planets on their  
course,

Why for his power benign seek an impurer  
source?

His was the true enthusiasm that burns  
long,

Domestically bright,  
Fed from itself and shy of human sight,  
The hidden force that makes a lifetime  
strong,

And not the short-lived fuel of a song.  
Passionless, say you? What is passion for

But to sublime our natures and control  
To front heroic toils with late return,

Or none, or such as shames the conqueror?  
That fire was fed with substance of the  
soul

And not with holiday stubble, that could  
burn,

Unpraised of men who after bonfires run,  
Through seven slow years of unadvancing  
war,

Equal when fields were lost or fields were  
won,

With breath of popular applause or blame,  
Nor fanned nor damped, unquenchably the  
same,

Too inward to be reached by flaws of idle  
fame.

## 3

Soldier and statesman, rarest unison;  
High-poised example of great duties done  
Simply as breathing, a world's honors worn  
As life's indifferent gifts to all men born;

Dumb for himself, unless it were to God,  
 But for his barefoot soldiers eloquent,  
 Tramping the snow to coral where they  
     trod,  
 Held by his awe in hollow-eyed content; 240  
 Modest, yet firm as Nature's self; un-  
     blamed  
 Save by the men his nobler temper  
     shamed;  
 Never seduced through show of present  
     good  
 By other than unsetting lights to steer  
 New-trimmed in Heaven, nor than his  
     steadfast mood  
 More steadfast, far from rashness as from  
     fear;  
 Rigid, but with himself first, grasping  
     still  
 In swerveless poise the wave-beat helm of  
     will;  
 Not honored then or now because he  
     wooded  
 The popular voice, but that he still with-  
     stood; 250  
 Broad-minded, higher-souled, there is but  
     one,  
 Who was all this and ours, and all men's,  
 — WASHINGTON.

## 4

Minds strong by fits, irregularly great,  
 That flash and darken like revolving lights,  
 Catch more the vulgar eye unschooled to  
     wait  
 On the long curve of patient days and  
     nights  
 Rounding a whole life to the circle fair  
 Of orb'd fulfilment; and this balanced  
     soul,  
 So simple in its grandeur, coldly bare  
 Of draperies theatric, standing there 260  
 In perfect symmetry of self-control,  
 Seems not so great at first, but greater  
     grows  
 Still as we look, and by experience learn  
 How grand this quiet is, how nobly stern  
 The discipline that wrought through life-  
     long throes  
 That energetic passion of repose.

## 5

A nature too decorous and severe,  
 Too self-respectful in its griefs and joys,  
 For ardent girls and boys  
 Who find its genius in a mind so clear 270

That its grave depths seem obvious and  
     near,  
 Nor a soul great that made so little noise.  
 They feel no force in that calm-cadenced  
     phrase,  
 The habitual full-dress of his well-bred  
     mind,  
 That seems to pace the minuet's courtly  
     maze  
 And tell of ampler leisures, roomier length  
     of days.  
 His firm-based brain, to self so little kind  
 That no tumultuary blood could blind,  
 Formed to control men, not amaze,  
 Looms not like those that borrow height of  
     haze: 280  
 It was a world of statelier movement then  
 Than this we fret in, he a denizen  
 Of that ideal Rome that made a man for  
     men.

## VI

## I

The longer on this earth we live  
 And weigh the various qualities of men,  
 Seeing how most are fugitive,  
 Or fitful gifts, at best, of now and then,  
 Wind-wavered corpse-lights, daughters of  
     the fen,  
 The more we feel the high stern-featured  
     beauty  
 Of plain devotedness to duty, 290  
 Steadfast and still, nor paid with mortal  
     praise,  
 But finding amplest recompense  
 For life's ungarlanded expense  
 In work done squarely and unwasted days.  
 For this we honor him, that he could  
     know  
 How sweet the service and how free  
 Of her, God's eldest daughter here below,  
 And choose in meanest raiment which was  
     she.

## 2

Placid completeness, life without a fall  
 From faith or highest aims, truth's breach-  
     less wall, 300  
 Surely if any fame can bear the touch,  
 His will say 'Here!' at the last trumpet's  
     call,  
 The unexpressive man whose life expressed  
     so much.

## VII

## 1

Never to see a nation born  
 Hath been given to mortal man,  
 Unless to those who, on that summer morn,  
 Gazed silent when the great Virginian  
 Unsheathed the sword whose fatal flash  
 Shot union through the incoherent clash  
 Of our loose atoms, crystallizing them 310  
 Around a single will's unpliant stem,  
 And making purpose of emotion rash.  
 Out of that scabbard sprang, as from its  
     womb,  
 Nebulous at first but hardening to a star,  
 Through mutual share of sunburst and of  
     gloom,  
 The common faith that made us what we  
     are.

## 2

That lifted blade transformed our jangling  
     clans,  
 Till then provincial, to Americans,  
 And made a unity of wildering plans;  
 Here was the doom fixed: here is marked  
     the date 320  
 When this New World awoke to man's  
     estate,  
 Burnt its last ship and ceased to look be-  
     hind:  
 Nor thoughtless was the choice; no love or  
     hate  
 Could from its poise move that deliberate  
     mind,  
 Weighing between too early and too late  
 Those pitfalls of the man refused by Fate:  
 His was the impartial vision of the great  
 Who see not as they wish, but as they  
     find.  
 He saw the dangers of defeat, nor less  
 The incomputable perils of success; 330  
 The sacred past thrown by, an empty rind;  
 The future, cloud-land, snare of prophets  
     blind;  
 The waste of war, the ignominy of peace;  
 On either hand a sullen rear of woes,  
 Whose garnered lightnings none could  
     guess,  
 Piling its thunder-heads and muttering  
     'Cease!'  
 Yet drew not back his hand, but gravely  
     chose  
 The seeming-desperate task whence our  
     new nation rose.

## 3

A noble choice and of immortal seed!  
 Nor deem that acts heroic wait on chance  
 Or easy were as in a boy's romance; 341  
 The man's whole life preludes the single  
     deed  
 That shall decide if his inheritance  
 Be with the sifted few of matchless breed,  
 Our race's sap and sustenance,  
 Or with the unmotivated herd that only sleep  
     and feed.  
 Choice seems a thing indifferent; thus or so,  
 What matters it? The Fates with mock-  
     ing face  
 Look on inexorable, nor seem to know  
 Where the lot lurks that gives life's fore-  
     most place. 350  
 Yet Duty's leaden casket holds it still,  
 And but two ways are offered to our will,  
 Toil with rare triumph, ease with safe dis-  
     grace,  
 The problem still for us and all of human  
     race.  
 He chose, as men choose, where most dan-  
     ger showed,  
 Nor ever faltered 'neath the load  
 Of petty cares, that gall great hearts the  
     most,  
 But kept right on the strenuous up-hill  
     road,  
 Strong to the end, above complaint or boast:  
 The popular tempest on his rock-mailed  
     coast 360  
 Wasted its wind-borne spray,  
 The noisy marvel of a day;  
 His soul sate still in its unstormed abode.

## VIII

Virginia gave us this imperial man  
 Cast in the massive mould  
 Of those high-statured ages old  
 Which into grander forms our mortal metal  
     ran;  
 She gave us this unblemished gentleman:  
 What shall we give her back but love and  
     praise  
 As in the dear old unestranged days 370  
 Before the inevitable wrong began?  
 Mother of States and undiminished men,  
 Thou gavest us a country, giving him,  
 And we owe alway what we owed thee then:  
 The boon thou wouldst have snatched from  
     us agen  
 Shines as before with no abatement dim.

A great man's memory is the only thing  
With influence to outlast the present whim  
And bind us as when here he knit our  
golden ring. 379

All of him that was subject to the hours  
Lies in thy soil and makes it part of ours:  
Across more recent graves,  
Where unresentful Nature waves  
Her pennons o'er the shot-ploughed sod,  
Proclaiming the sweet Truce of God,  
We from this consecrated plain stretch out  
Our hands as free from afterthought or  
doubt

As here the united North  
Poured her embrownèd manhood forth  
In welcome of our savior and thy son. 390  
Through battle we have better learned thy  
worth,

The long-breathed valor and undaunted  
will,  
Which, like his own, the day's disaster  
done,  
Could, safe in manhood, suffer and be still.  
Both thine and ours the victory hardly  
won;

If ever with distempered voice or pen  
We have misdeemed thee, here we take it  
back,  
And for the dead of both don common  
black.

Be to us evermore as thou wast then,  
As we forget thou hast not always been,  
Mother of States and unpolluted men, 401  
Virginia, fitly named from England's manly  
queen!

1875.

1875.

## AN ODE

FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1876

I

I

ENTRANCED I saw a vision in the cloud  
That loitered dreaming in yon sunset sky,  
Full of fair shapes, half creatures of the  
eye,

Half chance-evoked by the wind's fantasy  
In golden mist, an ever-shifting crowd:  
There, 'mid unreal forms that came and  
went

In air-spun robes, of evanescent dye,  
A woman's semblance shone preëminent;  
Not armed like Pallas, not like Hera proud,

But as on household diligence intent, 12  
Beside her visionary wheel she bent  
Like Aretë or Bertha, nor than they  
Less queenly in her port: about her knee  
Glad children clustered confident in play:  
Placid her pose, the calm of energy;  
And over her broad brow in many a round  
(That loosened would have gilt her gar-  
ment's hem),

Succinct, as toil prescribes, the hair was  
wound

In lustrous coils, a natural diadem.  
The cloud changed shape, obsequious to the  
whim 20

Of some transmuting influence felt in me,  
And, looking now, a wolf I seemed to see  
Limned in that vapor, gaunt and hunger-  
bold,

Threatening her charge: resolve in every  
limb,

Erect she flamed in mail of sun-wove gold,  
Penthesilea's self for battle dight;

One arm uplifted braced a flickering spear,  
And one her adamant shield made light;  
Her face, helm-shadowed, grew a thing to  
fear,

And her fierce eyes, by danger challenged,  
took 30

Her trident-sceptred mother's dauntless  
look.

'I know thee now, O goddess-born!' I  
cried,

And turned with loftier brow and firmer  
stride;

For in that spectral cloud-work I had seen  
Her image, bodied forth by love and pride,  
The fearless, the benign, the mother-eyed,  
The fairer world's toil-consecrated queen.

2

What shape by exile dreamed elates the  
mind

Like hers whose hand, a fortress of the  
poor,

No blood in vengeance spilt, though lawful,  
stains? 40

Who never turned a suppliant from her  
door?

Whose conquests are the gains of all man-  
kind?

To-day her thanks shall fly on every wind,  
Untinted, unrebuked, from shore to shore,  
One love, one hope, and not a doubt be-  
hind!

Cannon to cannon shall repeat her praise

Banner to banner flap it forth in flame;  
 Her children shall rise up to bless her  
     name,  
 And wish her harmless length of days,  
 The mighty mother of a mighty brood, 50  
 Blessed in all tongues and dear to every  
     blood,  
 The beautiful, the strong, and, best of all,  
     the good.

## 3

Seven years long was the bow  
 Of battle bent, and the heightening  
 Storm-heaps convulsed with the throe  
 Of their uncontainable lightning;  
 Seven years long heard the sea  
 Crash of navies and wave-borne thunder;  
 Then drifted the cloud-rack a-lee,  
 And new stars were seen, a world's won-  
     der; 60

Each by her sisters made bright,  
 All binding all to their stations,  
 Cluster of manifold light  
 Startling the old constellations:  
 Men looked up and grew pale:  
 Was it a comet or star,  
 Omen of blessing or bale,  
 Hung o'er the ocean afar?

## 4

Stormy the day of her birth:  
 Was she not born of the strong, 70  
 She, the last ripeness of earth,  
 Beautiful, prophesied long?  
 Stormy the days of her prime:  
 Hers are the pulses that beat  
 Higher for perils sublime,  
 Making them fawn at her feet.  
 Was she not born of the strong?  
 Was she not born of the wise?  
 Daring and counsel belong  
 Of right to her confident eyes: 80  
 Human and motherly they,  
 Careless of station or race:  
 Harken! her children to-day  
 Shout for the joy of her face.

## II

## I

No praises of the past are hers,  
 No fanes by hallowing time caressed,  
 No broken arch that ministers  
 To Time's sad instinct in the breast:

She has not gathered from the years  
 Grandeur of tragedies and tears, 90  
 Nor from long leisure the unrest  
 That finds repose in forms of classic grace:  
 These may delight the coming race  
 Who haply shall not count it to our crime  
 That we who fain would sing are here  
     before our time.

She also hath her monuments;  
 Not such as stand decrepitly resigned  
 To ruin-mark the path of dead events  
 That left no seed of better days behind,  
 The tourist's pensioners that show their  
     scars 100

And maunder of forgotten wars;  
 She builds not on the ground, but in the  
     mind,

Her open-hearted palaces  
 For larger-thoughted men with heaven and  
     earth at ease:

Her march the plump mow marks, the  
     sleepless wheel,  
 The golden sheaf, the self-swayed com-  
     monweal;

The happy homesteads hid in orchard trees  
 Whose sacrificial smokes through peaceful  
     air

Rise lost in heaven, the household's silent  
     prayer;

What architect hath bettered these? 110  
 With softened eye the westward traveller  
     sees

A thousand miles of neighbors side by side,  
 Holding by toil-won titles fresh from God  
 The lands no serf or seigneur ever trod,  
 With manhood latent in the very sod,  
 Where the long billow of the wheatfield's  
     tide

Flows to the sky across the prairie wide,  
 A sweeter vision than the castled Rhine,  
 Kindly with thoughts of Ruth and Bible-  
     days benign.

## 2

O ancient commonwealths, that we revere  
 Haply because we could not know you  
     near, 121

Your deeds like statues down the aisles of  
     Time

Shine peerless in memorial calm sublime,  
 And Athens is a trumpet still, and Rome;  
 Yet which of your achievements is not foam  
 Weighed with this one of hers (below you  
     far

In fame, and born beneath a milder star),

That to Earth's orphans, far as curves the  
dome  
Of death-deaf sky, the bounteous West  
means home,  
With dear precedence of natural ties 130  
That stretch from roof to roof and make  
men gently wise?  
And if the nobler passions wane,  
Distorted to base use, if the near goal  
Of insubstantial gain  
Tempt from the proper race-course of the  
soul  
That crowns their patient breath  
Whose feet, song-sandalled, are too fleet  
for Death,  
Yet may she claim one privilege urbane  
And haply first upon the civic roll,  
That none can breathe her air nor grow  
humane. 140

## 3

Oh, better far the briefest hour  
Of Athens self-consumed, whose plastic  
power  
Hid Beauty safe from Death in words or  
stone;  
Of Rome, fair quarry where those eagles  
crowd  
Whose fulgurous vans about the world had  
blown  
Triumphant storm and seeds of polity;  
Of Venice, fading o'er her shipless sea,  
Last iridescence of a sunset cloud;  
Than this inert prosperity,  
This bovine comfort in the sense alone! 150  
Yet art came slowly even to such as those,  
Whom no past genius cheated of their  
own  
With prudence of o'ermastering precedent;  
Petal by petal spreads the perfect rose,  
Secure of the divine event;  
And only children rend the bud half-blown  
To forestall Nature in her calm intent:  
Time hath a quiver full of purposes  
Which miss not of their aim, to us un-  
known,  
And brings about the impossible with ease:  
Haply for us the ideal dawn shall break 161  
From where in legend-tinted line  
The peaks of Hellas drink the morning's  
wine,  
To tremble on our lids with mystic sign  
Till the drowsed ichor in our veins awake  
And set our pulse in tune with moods  
divine:

Long the day lingered in its sea-fringed  
nest,  
Then touched the Tuscan hills with golden  
lance  
And paused; then on to Spain and France  
The splendor flew, and Albion's misty  
crest: 170  
Shall Ocean bar him from his destined  
West?  
Or are we, then, arrived too late,  
Doomed with the rest to grope disconsolate,  
Foreclosed of Beauty by our modern date?

## III

## I

Poets, as their heads grow gray,  
Look from too far behind the eyes,  
Too long-experienced to be wise  
In guileless youth's diviner way;  
Life sings not now, but prophesies;  
Time's shadows they no more behold, 180  
But, under them, the riddle old  
That mocks, bewilders, and defies:  
In childhood's face the seed of shame,  
In the green tree an ambushed flame,  
In Phosphor a vaunt-guard of Night,  
They, though against their will, divine,  
And dread the care-dispelling wine  
Stored from the Muse's vintage bright,  
By age imbued with second-sight.  
From Faith's own eyelids there peeps out,  
Even as they look, the leer of doubt; 191  
The festal wreath their fancy loads  
With care that whispers and forebodes:  
Nor this our triumph-day can blunt Me-  
gæra's goads.

## 2

Murmur of many voices in the air  
Denounces us degenerate,  
Unfaithful guardians of a noble fate,  
And prompts indifference or despair:  
Is this the country that we dreamed in  
youth,  
Where wisdom and not numbers should  
have weight, 200  
Seed-field of simpler manners, braver  
truth,  
Where shams should cease to dominate  
In household, church, and state?  
Is this Atlantis? This the unpoisoned soil,  
Sea-whelmed for ages and recovered late,  
Where parasitic greed no more should coil

Round Freedom's stem to bend awry and  
blight

What grew so fair, sole plant of love and  
light?

Who sit where once in crowned seclusion  
sate

The long-proved athletes of debate <sup>210</sup>  
Trained from their youth, as none thinks  
needful now?

Is this debating club where boys dispute,  
And wrangle o'er their stolen fruit,  
The Senate, erewhile cloister of the few,  
Where Clay once flashed and Webster's  
cloudy brow

Brooded those bolts of thought that all the  
horizon knew?

## 3

Oh, as this pensive moonlight blurs my  
pines,  
Here while I sit and meditate these lines,  
To gray-green dreams of what they are by  
day,

So would some light, not reason's sharp-  
edged ray, <sup>220</sup>

Trance me in moonshine as before the  
flight

Of years had won me this unwelcome right  
To see things as they are, or shall be  
soon,

In the frank prose of undissembling noon!

## 4

Back to my breast, ungrateful sigh!

Whoever fails, whoever errs,

The penalty be ours, not hers!

The present still seems vulgar, seen too  
nigh;

The golden age is still the age that's past:  
I ask no drowsy opiate <sup>230</sup>

To dull my vision of that only state  
Founded on faith in man, and therefore  
sure to last.

For, O my country, touched by thee,  
The gray hairs gather back their gold;  
Thy thought sets all my pulses free;  
The heart refuses to be old;  
The love is all that I can see.

Not to thy natal-day belong  
Time's prudent doubt or age's wrong,  
But gifts of gratitude and song: <sup>240</sup>

Unsummoned crowd the thankful words,  
As sap in spring-time floods the tree,  
Foreboding the return of birds,  
For all that thou hast been to me!

## IV

## 1

Flawless his heart and tempered to the  
core

Who, beckoned by the forward-leaning  
wave,

First left behind him the firm-footed shore,  
And, urged by every nerve of sail and  
oar,

Steered for the Unknown which gods to  
mortals gave, <sup>249</sup>

Of thought and action the mysterious door,  
Bugbear of fools, a summons to the brave:  
Strength found he in the unsympathizing  
sun,

And strange stars from beneath the horizon  
won,

And the dumb ocean pitilessly grave:

High-hearted surely he;

But bolder they who first off-cast

Their moorings from the habitable Past

And ventured chartless on the sea

Of storm-engendering Liberty:

For all earth's width of waters is a span, <sup>260</sup>

And their convulsed existence mere re-  
pose,

Matched with the unstable heart of man,  
Shoreless in wants, mist-girt in all it  
knows,

Open to every wind of sect or clan,

And sudden-passionate in ebbs and flows.

## 2

They steered by stars the elder shipmen  
knew,

And laid their courses where the currents  
draw

Of ancient wisdom channelled deep in law,  
The undaunted few

Who changed the Old World for the  
New, <sup>270</sup>

And more devoutly prized

Than all perfection theorized

The more imperfect that had roots and  
grew.

They founded deep and well,

Those danger-chosen chiefs of men

Who still believed in Heaven and Hell,

Nor hoped to find a spell,

In some fine flourish of a pen,

To make a better man

Than long-considering Nature will or can,  
Secure against his own mistakes, <sup>281</sup>

Content with what life gives or takes,



And acting still on some fore-ordered plan,  
A cog of iron in an iron wheel,  
Too nicely poised to think or feel,  
Dumb motor in a clock-like common-  
weal.

They wasted not their brain in schemes  
Of what man might be in some bubble-  
sphere,

As if he must be other than he seems  
Because he was not what he should be  
here,

Postponing Time's slow proof to petulant  
dreams:

Yet herein they were great

Beyond the incredulous lawgivers of yore,  
And wiser than the wisdom of the shelf,  
That they conceived a deeper-rooted state,  
Of hardier growth, alive from rind to  
core,

By making man sole sponsor of himself.

3

God of our fathers, Thou who wast,  
Art, and shalt be when those eye-wise who  
flout

Thy secret presence shall be lost  
In the great light that dazzles them to  
doubt,

We, sprung from loins of stalwart men  
Whose strength was in their trust  
That Thou wouldst make thy dwelling in  
their dust

And walk with those a fellow-citizen  
Who build a city of the just,

We, who believe Life's bases rest  
Beyond the probe of chemic test,  
Still, like our fathers, feel Thee near,  
Sure that, while lasts the immutable decree,  
The land to Human Nature dear  
Shall not be unbeloved of Thee.

1876.

1876.

## DEATH OF QUEEN MERCEDES <sup>1</sup>

HERS all that Earth could promise or be-  
stow, —

Youth, Beauty, Love, a crown, the beckon-  
ing years,

Lids never wet, unless with joyous tears,  
A life remote from every sordid woe,  
And by a nation's swelled to lordlier flow.  
What lurking-place, thought we, for doubts  
or fears,

When, the day's swan, she swam along the  
cheers

Of the Alcalá, five happy months ago?  
The guns were shouting Io Hymen then  
That, on her birthday, now denounce her  
doom;

The same white steeds that tossed their  
scorn of men

To-day as proudly drag her to the tomb.  
Grim jest of fate! Yet who dare call it  
blind,

Knowing what life is, what our human-kind?  
1878. (1888.)

<sup>1</sup> Anything more tragic than the circumstances of her death it would be hard to imagine. She was actually receiving extreme unction while the guns were firing in honor of her eighteenth birthday, and four days later we saw her dragged to her dreary tomb at the Escorial, followed by the coach and its eight white horses in which she had driven in triumph from the church to the palace on the day of her wedding. The poor brutes tossed their snowy plumes as haughtily now as then. (LOWELL, in a letter to his daughter, Mabel Lowell Burnett, July 28, 1878. Quoted by permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.)

## PHOEBE <sup>2</sup>

ERE pales in Heaven the morning star  
A bird, the loneliest of its kind,  
Hears Dawn's faint footfall from afar  
While all its mates are dumb and blind.

It is a wee sad-colored thing,  
As shy and secret as a maid,  
That, ere in choir the robins sing,  
Pipes its own name like one afraid.

It seems pain-prompted to repeat  
The story of some ancient ill,  
But *Phæbe! Phæbe!* sadly sweet  
Is all it says, and then is still.

It calls and listens. Earth and sky,  
Hushed by the pathos of its fate,  
Listen: no whisper of reply  
Comes from its doom-dissevered mate.

*Phæbe!* it calls and calls again,  
And Ovid, could he but have heard,  
Had hung a legendary pain  
About the memory of the bird;

A pain articulate so long,  
In penance of some mouldered crime

<sup>2</sup> For Lowell's careful revision of this poem, see his letters to Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, September 4, 5, 6, 8, and 12, and October 24, 1881; quoted in the *Cambridge Edition of Lowell*, pp. 480-481.

Whose ghost still flies the Furies' thong  
Down the waste solitudes of time.

Waif of the young World's wonder-hour,  
When gods found mortal maidens fair,  
And will malign was joined with power  
Love's kindly laws to overbear,

Like Progne, did it feel the stress  
And coil of the prevailing words 30  
Close round its being, and compress  
Man's ampler nature to a bird's ?

One only memory left of all  
The motley crowd of vanished scenes,  
Hers, and vain impulse to recall  
By repetition what it means.

*Phæbe* ! is all it has to say  
In plaintive cadence o'er and o'er,  
Like children that have lost their way,  
And know their names, but nothing more.

Is it a type, since Nature's Lyre 41  
Vibrates to every note in man,  
Of that insatiable desire,  
Meant to be so since life began ?

I, in strange lands at gray of dawn,  
Wakeful, have heard that fruitless plaint  
Through Memory's chambers deep with-  
drawn  
Renew its iterations faint.

So nigh ! yet from remotest years  
It summons back its magic, rife 50  
With longings unappeased, and tears  
Drawn from the very source of life.  
1881. 1881.

### TO WHITTIER

#### ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

NEW ENGLAND'S poet, rich in love as years,  
Her hills and valleys praise thee, her swift  
brooks  
Dance in thy verse; to her grave sylvan  
nooks  
Thy steps allure us, which the wood-thrush  
hears  
As maids their lovers', and no treason fears;  
Through thee her Merrimacs and Agio-  
chooks

And many a name uncouth win gracious  
looks,  
Sweetly familiar to both Englands' ears:

Peaceful by birthright as a virgin lake,  
The lily's anchorage, which no eyes behold  
Save those of stars, yet for thy brother's  
sake

That lay in bonds, thou blewst a blast as  
bold

As that wherewith the heart of Roland  
brake,

Far heard across the New World and the  
Old.

1882.

1882.

### TO HOLMES

#### ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

DEAR Wendell, why need count the years  
Since first your genius made me thrill,  
If what moved then to smiles or tears,  
Or both contending, move me still ?

What has the Calendar to do  
With poets ? What Time's fruitless tooth  
With gay immortals such as you  
Whose years but emphasize your youth ?

One air gave both their lease of breath;  
The same paths lured our boyish feet; 10  
One earth will hold us safe in death  
With dust of saints and scholars sweet.

Our legends from one source were drawn,  
I scarce distinguish yours from mine,  
And *don't* we make the Gentiles yawn  
With 'You remembers ?' o'er our wine !

If I, with too senescent air,  
Invade your elder memory's pale,  
You snub me with a pitying 'Where  
Were you in the September Gale ?' 20

Both stared entranced at Lafayette,  
Saw Jackson dubbed with LL. D.  
What Cambridge saw not strikes us yet  
As scarcely worth one's while to see.

Ten years my senior, when my name  
In Harvard's entrance-book was writ,  
Her halls still echoed with the fame  
Of you, her poet and her wit.

'T is fifty years from then to now:

But your Last Leaf renews its green, 30  
Though, for the laurels on your brow  
(So thick they crowd), 't is hardly seen.

The oriole's fledglings fifty times  
Have flown from our familiar elms;  
As many poets with their rhymes  
Oblivion's darkling dust o'erwhelms.

The birds are hushed, the poets gone  
Where no harsh critic's lash can reach,  
And still your wingèd brood sing on  
To all who love our English speech. 40

Nay, let the foolish records be  
That make believe you're seventy-five:  
You're the old Wendell still to me, —  
And that's the youngest man alive.

The gray-blue eyes, I see them still,  
The gallant front with brown o'erhung,  
The shape alert, the wit at will,  
The phrase that stuck, but never stung.

You keep your youth as yon Scotch firs,  
Whose gaunt line my horizon hems, 50  
Though twilight all the lowland blurs,  
Hold sunset in their ruddy stems.

You with the elders? Yes, 't is true,  
But in no sadly literal sense,  
With elders and coevals too,  
Whose verb admits no preterite tense.

Master alike in speech and song  
Of fame's great antiseptic — Style,  
You with the classic few belong  
Who tempered wisdom with a smile. 60

Outlive us all! Who else like you  
Could sift the seedcorn from our chaff,  
And make us with the pen we knew  
Deathless at least in epitaph?

1884.

1884.

### INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT

In vain we call old notions fudge,  
And bend our conscience to our deal-  
ing;  
The Ten Commandments will not budge,  
And stealing will continue stealing.

1885.

1886.

### SIXTY-EIGHTH BIRTHDAY

As life runs on, the road grows strange  
With faces new, and near the end  
The milestones into headstones change,  
'Neath every one a friend.

1887.

### INSCRIPTION

#### PROPOSED FOR A SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT IN BOSTON

To those who died for her on land and  
sea,  
That she might have a country great and  
free,  
Boston builds this: build ye her monument  
In lives like theirs, at duty's summons  
spent.

1887.

### ENDYMION<sup>1</sup>

#### A MYSTICAL COMMENT ON TITIAN'S 'SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE'

I

My day began not till the twilight fell,  
And, lo, in ether from heaven's sweetest  
well,  
The New Moon swam divinely isolate  
In maiden silence, she that makes my fate  
Haply not knowing it, or only so  
As I the secrets of my sheep may know;  
Nor ask I more, entirely blest if she,  
In letting me adore, ennoble me  
To height of what the Gods meant making  
man,  
As only she and her best beauty can. 10  
Mine be the love that in itself can find  
Seed of white thoughts, the lilies of the  
mind,  
Seed of that glad surrender of the will  
That finds in service self's true purpose  
still;  
Love that in outward fairness sees the tent  
Pitched for an inmate far more excellent;  
Love with a light irradiate to the core,  
Lit at her lamp, but fed from inborn store;

<sup>1</sup> See Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, vol. ii, pp. 371, 372, and also two letters from Lowell to Mr. Garrison, on 'Endymion,' quoted in Greenleaf's *Lowell*, pp. 217, 218.

Love thrice-requited with the single joy 19  
 Of an immaculate vision naught could cloy,  
 Dearer because, so high beyond my scope,  
 My life grew rich with her, unbribed by  
 hope

Of other guerdon save to think she knew  
 One grateful votary paid her all her due;  
 Happy if she, high-radiant there, resigned  
 To his sure trust her image in his mind.  
 O fairer even than Peace is when she  
 comes

Hushing War's tumult, and retreating  
 drums

Fade to a murmur like the sough of bees  
 Hidden among the noon-stilled linden-trees,  
 Bringer of quiet, thou that canst allay 31  
 The dust and din and travail of the day,  
 Strewer of Silence, Giver of the dew  
 That doth our pastures and our souls re-  
 new,

Still dwell remote, still on thy shoreless sea  
 Float unattained in silent empery,  
 Still light my thoughts, nor listen to a  
 prayer

Would make thee less imperishably fair !

## II

Can, then, my twofold nature find content  
 In vain conceits of airy blandishment ? 40  
 Ask I no more ? Since yesterday I task  
 My storm-strewn thoughts to tell me what  
 I ask:

Faint premonitions of mutation strange  
 Steal o'er my perfect orb, and, with the  
 change,  
 Myself am changed; the shadow of my  
 earth

Darkens the disk of that celestial worth  
 Which only yesterday could still suffice  
 Upwards to waft my thoughts in sacrifice;  
 My heightened fancy with its touches  
 warm

Moulds to a woman's that ideal form; 50  
 Nor yet a woman's wholly, but divine  
 With awe her purer essence bred in mine.  
 Was it long brooding on their own surmise,  
 Which, of the eyes engendered, fools the  
 eyes,

Or have I seen through that translucent air  
 A Presence shaped in its seclusions bare,  
 My Goddess looking on me from above  
 As look our russet maidens when they love,  
 But high-uplifted o'er our human heat  
 And passion-paths too rough for her pearl  
 feet ? 60

Slowly the Shape took outline as I gazed  
 At her full-orbed or crescent, till, bedazed  
 With wonder-working light that subtly  
 wrought

My brain to its own substance, steeping  
 thought

In trances such as poppies give, I saw  
 Things shut from vision by sight's sober  
 law,

Amorphous, changeful, but defined at last  
 Into the peerless Shape mine eyes hold fast.  
 This, too, at first I worshipt: soon, like  
 wine,

Her eyes, in mine poured, frenzy-philtred  
 mine; 70

Passion put Worship's priestly raiment on  
 And to the woman knelt, the Goddess gone.  
 Was I, then, more than mortal made ? or  
 she

Less than divine that she might mate with  
 me ?

If mortal merely, could my nature cope  
 With such o'er mastery of maddening hope ?  
 If Goddess, could she feel the blissful woe  
 That women in their self-surrender know ?

## III

Long she abode aloof there in her heaven,  
 Far as the grape-bunch of the Pleiad seven  
 Beyond my madness' utmost leap; but  
 here 81

Mine eyes have feigned of late her rapture  
 near,  
 Moulded of mind-mist that broad day dis-  
 pels,  
 Here in these shadowy woods and brook-  
 lulled dells.

Have no heaven-habitants e'er felt a void  
 In hearts sublimed with ichor unalloyed ?  
 E'er longed to mingle with a mortal fate  
 Intense with pathos of its briefer date ?  
 Could she partake, and live, our human  
 stains ?

Even with the thought there tingles through  
 my veins 90

Sense of unwarned renewal; I, the dead,  
 Receive and house again the ardor fled,  
 As once Alcestis; to the ruddy brim  
 Feel masculine virtue flooding every limb,  
 And life, like Spring returning, brings the  
 key

That sets my senses from their winter free,  
 Dancing like naked fauns too glad for  
 shame.

Her passion, purified to palest flame,  
Can it thus kindle? Is her purpose this?  
I will not argue, lest I lose a bliss <sup>100</sup>  
That makes me dream Tithonus' fortune  
mine

(Or what of it was palpably divine  
Ere came the fruitlessly immortal gift);  
I cannot curb my hope's imperious drift  
That wings with fire my dull mortality;  
Though fancy-forged, 't is all I feel or see.

## IV

My Goddess sinks; round Latmos' darken-  
ing brow

Trembles the parting of her presence now,  
Faint as the perfume left upon the grass  
By her limbs' pressure or her feet that  
pass <sup>110</sup>

By me conjectured, but conjectured so  
As things I touch far fainter substance  
show.

Was it mine eyes' imposture I have seen  
Flit with the moonbeams on from shade to  
sheen

Through the wood-openings? Nay, I see  
her now

Out of her heaven new-lighted, from her  
brow

The hair breeze-scattered, like loose mists  
that blow

Across her crescent, goldening as they go  
High-kirtled for the chase, and what was  
shown,

Of maiden rondure, like the rose half-  
blown. <sup>120</sup>

If dream, turn real! If a vision, stay!

Take mortal shape, my philtre's spell obey!

If hags compel thee from thy secret sky

With gruesome incantations, why not I,

Whose only magic is that I distil

A potion, blent of passion, thought, and  
will,

Deeper in reach, in force of fate more  
rich,

Than e'er was juice wrung by Thessalian  
witch

From moon-enchanted herbs, — a potion  
brewed

Of my best life in each diviner mood? <sup>130</sup>

Myself the elixir am, myself the bowl

Seething and mantling with my soul of soul.

Taste and be humanized: what though the  
cup,

With thy lips frenzied, shatter? Drink it  
up!

If but these arms may clasp, o'erquited so,  
My world, thy heaven, all life means I  
shall know.

## V

Sure she hath heard my prayer and granted  
half,

As Gods do who at mortal madness laugh.  
Yet if life's solid things illusion seem,  
Why may not substance wear the mask of  
dream? <sup>140</sup>

In sleep she comes; she visits me in  
dreams,

And, as her image in a thousand streams,

So in my veins, that her obey, she sees,

Floating and flaming there, her images

Bear to my little world's remotest zone

Glad messages of her, and her alone.

With silence-sandalled Sleep she comes to  
me

(But softer-footed, sweeter-browed, than  
she),

In motion gracious as a seagull's wing,

And all her bright limbs, moving, seem to  
sing. <sup>150</sup>

Let me believe so, then, if so I may

With the night's bounty feed my beggared  
day.

In dreams I see her lay the goddess down

With bow and quiver, and her crescent-  
crown

Flicker and fade away to dull eclipse

As down to mine she deigns her longed-for  
lips;

And as her neck my happy arms enfold,  
Flooded and lusted with her loosened gold,  
She whispers words each sweeter than a  
kiss:

Then, wakened with the shock of sudden  
bliss, <sup>160</sup>

My arms are empty, my awakener fled,

And, silent in the silent sky o'erhead,

But coldly as on ice-plated snow, she  
gleams,

Herself the mother and the child of dreams.

## VI

Gone is the time when phantasms could  
appease

My quest phantasmal and bring cheated  
ease;

When, if she glorified my dreams, I felt

Through all my limbs a change immortal  
melt

At touch of hers illuminate with soul.

Not long could I be stilled with Fancy's  
dole; 170

Too soon the mortal mixture in me caught  
Red fire from her celestial flame, and  
fought

For tyrannous control in all my veins:

My fool's prayer was accepted; what re-  
mains?

Or was it some idolon merely, sent  
By her who rules the shades in banishment,  
To mock me with her semblance? Were  
it thus,

How 'scape I shame, whose will was trai-  
torous?

What shall compensate an ideal dimmed?  
How blanch again my statue virgin-limbed,  
Soiled with the incense-smoke her chosen  
priest 181

Poured more profusely as within decreased  
The fire unearthly, fed with coals from far  
Within the soul's shrine? Could my fallen  
star

Be set in heaven again by prayers and tears  
And quenchless sacrifice of all my years,  
How would the victim to the flamen leap,  
And life for life's redemption paid hold  
cheap!

But what resource when she herself de-  
scends

From her blue throne, and o'er her vassal  
bends 190

That shape thrice-deified by love, those eyes  
Wherein the Lethe of all others lies?

When my white queen of heaven's remote-  
ness tires,

Herself against her other self conspires,  
Takes woman's nature, walks in mortal  
ways,

And finds in my remorse her beauty's  
praise?

Yet all would I renounce to dream again  
The dream in dreams fulfilled that made  
my pain,

My noble pain that heightened all my years  
With crowns to win and prowess-breeding  
tears; 200

Nay, would that dream renounce once more  
to see

Her from her sky there looking down at me!

## VII

Goddess, reclimb thy heaven, and be once  
more

An inaccessible splendor to adore,

A faith, a hope of such transcendent worth  
As bred ennobling discontent with earth;  
Give back the longing, back the elated  
mood

That, fed with thee, spurned every meaner  
good;

Give even the spur of impotent despair

That, without hope, still bade aspire and  
dare; 210

Give back the need to worship, that still  
pours

Down to the soul the virtue it adores!

Nay, brightest and most beautiful, deem  
naught

These frantic words, the reckless wind of  
thought:

Still stoop, still grant, — I live but in thy  
will;

Be what thou wilt, but be a woman still!

Vainly I cried, nor could myself believe

That what I prayed for I would fain re-  
ceive.

My moon is set; my vision set with her;

No more can worship vain my pulses stir.

Goddess Triform, I own thy triple spell, 221

My heaven's queen, — queen, too, of my  
earth and hell!

1887. <sup>1</sup>

1888.

## AUSPEX

My heart, I cannot still it,  
Nest that had song-birds in it;  
And when the last shall go,  
The dreary days, to fill it,  
Instead of lark or linnet,  
Shall whirl dead leaves and snow.

Had they been swallows only,  
Without the passion stronger  
That skyward longs and sings, —  
Woe's me, I shall be lonely  
When I can feel no longer  
The impatience of their wings!

A moment, sweet delusion,  
Like birds the brown leaves hover;  
But it will not be long  
Before the wild confusion  
Fall wavering down to cover  
The poet and his song.

(1888.)

<sup>1</sup> Parts of the poem were written much earlier.

## THE PREGNANT COMMENT

OPENING one day a book of mine,  
I absent, Hester found a line  
Praised with a pencil-mark, and this  
She left transfigured with a kiss.

When next upon the page I chance,  
Like Poussin's nymphs my pulses dance,  
And whirl my fancy where it sees  
Pan piping 'neath Arcadian trees,  
Whose leaves no winter-scenes rehearse,  
Still young and glad as Homer's verse.  
'What mean,' I ask, 'these sudden joys?  
This feeling fresher than a boy's?  
What makes this line, familiar long,  
New as the first bird's April song?  
I could, with sense illumined thus,  
Clear doubtful texts in Æschylus!'

Laughing, one day she gave the key,  
My riddle's open-sesame;  
Then added, with a smile demure,  
Whose downcast lids veiled triumph sure,  
'If what I left there give you pain,  
You — you — can take it off again;  
'T was for *my* poet, not for him,  
Your Doctor Donne there!'

Earth grew dim

And wavered in a golden mist,  
As rose, not paper, leaves I kissed.  
Donne, you forgive? I let you keep  
Her precious comment, poet deep.

(1888.)

## TELEPATHY

'AND how could you dream of meeting?'  
Nay, how can you ask me, sweet?  
All day my pulse had been beating  
The tune of your coming feet.

And as nearer and ever nearer  
I felt the throb of your tread,  
To be in the world grew dearer,  
And my blood ran rosier red.

Love called, and I could not linger,  
But sought the forbidden tryst,  
As music follows the finger  
Of the dreaming lutanist.

And though you had said it and said it,  
'We must not be happy to-day,'

Was I not wiser to credit  
The fire in my feet than your Nay?  
(1888.)

## THE SECRET

I HAVE a fancy: how shall I bring it  
Home to all mortals wherever they be?  
Say it or sing it? Shoe it or wing it,  
So it may outrun or outfly ME,  
Merest cocoon-web whence it broke free?

Only one secret can save from disaster,  
Only one magic is that of the Master:  
Set it to music; give it a tune, —  
Tune the brook sings you, tune the breeze  
brings you,  
Tune the wild columbines nod to in June!

This is the secret: so simple, you see!  
Easy as loving, easy as kissing,  
Easy as — well, let me ponder — as miss-  
ing,  
Known, since the world was, by scarce two  
or three.

1888.

## MONNA LISA

SHE gave me all that woman can,  
Nor her soul's nunnery forego,  
A confidence that man to man  
Without remorse can never show.

Rare art, that can the sense refine  
Till not a pulse rebellious stirs,  
And, since she never can be mine,  
Makes it seem sweeter to be hers!  
(1888.)

## THE NOBLER LOVER

If he be a nobler lover, take him!  
You in you I seek, and not myself;  
Love with men's what women choose to  
make him,  
Seraph strong to soar, or fawn-eyed elf:  
All I am or can, your beauty gave it,  
Lifting me a moment nigh to you,  
And my bit of heaven, I fain would save  
it —  
Mine I thought it was, I never knew.



What you take of me is yours to serve  
you,

All I give, you gave to me before;  
Let him win you! If I but deserve you,  
I keep all you grant to him and more:  
You shall make me dare what others dare  
not,

You shall keep my nature pure as snow,  
And a light from you that others share  
not

Shall transfigure me where'er I go.

Let me be your thrall! However lowly

Be the bondsman's service I can do,  
Loyalty shall make it high and holy;

Naught can be unworthy, done for you.  
Men shall say, 'A lover of this fashion  
Such an icy mistress well beseems.'

Women say, 'Could we deserve such pas-  
sion,

We might be the marvel that he dreams.'  
(1895.)

#### 'FRANCISCUS DE VERULAMIO SIC COGITAVIT'

THAT's a rather bold speech, my Lord  
Bacon,

For, indeed, is 't so easy to know  
Just how much we from others have  
taken,

And how much our own natural flow?

Since your mind bubbled up at its foun-  
tain,

How many streams made it elate,  
While it calmed to the plain from the  
mountain,

As every mind must that grows great?

While you thought 't was You thinking as  
newly

As Adam still wet with God's dew, 10  
You forgot in your self-pride that truly  
The whole Past was thinking through  
you.

Greece, Rome, nay, your namesake, old  
Roger,

With Truth's nameless delvers who  
wrought

In the dark mines of Truth, helped to prod  
your

Fine brain with the goad of their thought.

As mummy was prized for a rich hue  
The painter no elsewhere could find,  
So 't was buried men's thinking with which  
you

Gave the ripe mellow tone to your  
mind. 20

I heard the proud strawberry saying,  
'Only look what a ruby I've made!'  
It forgot how the bees in their maying  
Had brought it the stuff for its trade.

And yet there's the half of a truth in it,  
And my Lord might his copyright sue;  
For a thought's his who kindles new youth  
in it,  
Or so puts it as makes it more true.

The birds but repeat without ending  
The same old traditional notes, 30  
Which some, by more happily blending,  
Seem to make over new in their throats;

And we men through our old bit of song  
run,

Until one just improves on the rest,  
And we call a thing his, in the long run,  
Who utters it clearest and best.

1888.

#### IN A COPY OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

THESE pearls of thought in Persian gulfs  
were bred,

Each softly lucent as a rounded moon;  
The diver Omar plucked them from their  
bed,

Fitzgerald strung them on an English  
thread.

Fit rosary for a queen, in shape and hue,  
When Contemplation tells her pensive  
beads

Of mortal thoughts, forever old and new.  
Fit for a queen? Why, surely then for  
you!

The moral? Where Doubt's eddies toss  
and twirl

Faith's slender shallop till her footing reel,  
Plunge: if you find not peace beneath the  
whirl,

Groping, you may like Omar grasp a pearl.  
1888.

## TURNER'S OLD TÉMÉRAIRE

## UNDER A FIGURE SYMBOLIZING THE CHURCH

THOU wast the fairest of all man-made things;  
 The breath of heaven bore up thy cloudy wings,  
 And, patient in their triple rank,  
 The thunders crouched about thy flank,  
 Their black lips silent with the doom of kings.

The storm-wind loved to rock him in thy pines,  
 And swell thy vans with breath of great designs;  
 Long-wildered pilgrims of the main  
 By thee relaid their course again,  
 Whose prow was guided by celestial signs.

How didst thou trample on tumultuous seas,  
 Or, like some basking sea-beast stretched at ease,  
 Let the bull-fronted surges glide  
 Caressingly along thy side,  
 Like glad hounds leaping by the huntsman's knees!

Heroic feet, with fire of genius shod,  
 In battle's ecstasy thy deck have trod,  
 While from their touch a fulgor ran  
 Through plank and spar, from man to man,  
 Welding thee to a thunderbolt of God. 20

Now a black demon, belching fire and steam,  
 Drags thee away, a pale, dismantled dream,  
 And all thy desecrated hulk  
 Must landlocked lie, a helpless bulk,  
 To gather weeds in the regardless stream.

Woe's me, from Ocean's sky-horizoned air  
 To this! Better, the flame-cross still aflare,  
 Shot-shattered to have met thy doom  
 Where thy last lightnings cheered the gloom,  
 Than here be safe in dangerless despair. 30

Thy drooping symbol to the flagstaff clings,  
 Thy rudder soothes the tide to lazy rings,

Thy thunders now but birthdays greet,  
 Thy planks forget the martyrs' feet,  
 Thy masts what challenges the sea-wind brings.

Thou a mere hospital, where human wrecks,  
 Like winter-flies, crawl those renowned decks,  
 Ne'er trodden save by captive foes,  
 And wonted sternly to impose  
 God's will and thine on bowed imperial necks! 40

Shall nevermore, engendered of thy fame,  
 A new sea-eagle heir thy conqueror name,  
 And with commissioned talons wrench  
 From thy supplanter's grimy clench  
 His sheath of steel, his wings of smoke and flame?

This shall the pleased eyes of our children see;  
 For this the stars of God long even as we;  
 Earth listens for his wings; the Fates  
 Expectant lean; Faith cross-propt waits,  
 And the tired waves of Thought's insurgent sea. 50

1888.

ON A BUST OF GENERAL GRANT<sup>1</sup>

STRONG, simple, silent are the [steadfast] laws

That sway this universe, of none withstood,  
 Unconscious of man's outcries or applause,  
 Or what man deems his evil or his good;

<sup>1</sup> This poem is the last, so far as is known, written by Mr. Lowell. He laid it aside for revision, leaving two of the verses incomplete. In a pencilled fragment of the poem the first verse appears as follows:—

Strong, simple, silent, such are Nature's Laws.

In the final copy, from which the poem is now printed, the verse originally stood:—

Strong, steadfast, silent are the Laws.

but 'steadfast' is crossed out, and 'simple' written above.

A similar change is made in the ninth verse of the stanza, where 'simplicity' is substituted for 'steadfastness.' The change from 'steadfast' to 'simple' was not made, probably through oversight, in the first verse of the second stanza. There is nothing to indicate what epithet Mr. Lowell would have chosen to complete the first verse of the third stanza. (Note by Professor C. E. Norton, in *Last Poems of James Russell Lowell*.)

And when the Fates ally them with a cause  
 That wallows in the sea-trough and seems  
     lost,  
 Drifting in danger of the reefs and sands  
 Of shallow counsels, this way, that way,  
     tost,  
 Strength, silence, simpleness, of these three  
     strands  
 They twist the cable shall the world hold  
     fast  
 To where its anchors clutch the bed-rock<sup>10</sup>  
     of the Past.

Strong, simple, silent, therefore such was  
     he  
 Who helped us in our need; the eternal law  
 That who can saddle Opportunity  
 Is God's elect, though many a mortal flaw  
 May minish him in eyes that closely see,  
 Was verified in him: what need we say  
 Of one who made success where others  
     failed,  
 Who, with no light save that of common  
     day,  
 Struck hard, and still struck on till For-  
     tune quailed,<sup>20</sup>  
 But that (so sift the Norns) a desperate  
     van  
 Ne'er fell at last to one who was not wholly  
     man.

A face all prose where Time's [benignant]  
     haze  
 Softens no raw edge yet, nor makes all fair  
 With the beguiling light of vanished days;  
 This is relentless granite, bleak and bare,  
 Roughhewn, and scornful of æsthetic  
     phrase;  
 Nothing is here for fancy, nought for  
     dreams,  
 The Present's hard uncompromising light  
 Accents all vulgar outlines, flaws, and  
     seams,<sup>30</sup>  
 Yet vindicates some pristine natural right  
 O'ertopping that hereditary grace  
 Which marks the gain or loss of some time-  
     fondled race.

So Marius looked, methinks, and Crom-  
     well so,  
 Not in the purple born, to those they led  
 Nearer for that and costlier to the foe,  
 New moulders of old forms, by nature  
     bred

The exhaustless life of manhood's seeds to  
     show,  
 Let but the ploughshare of portentous  
     times  
 Strike deep enough to reach them where  
     they lie:<sup>40</sup>  
 Despair and danger are their fostering  
     climes,  
 And their best sun bursts from a stormy  
     sky:  
 He was our man of men, nor would abate  
 The utmost due manhood could claim of  
     fate.

Nothing ideal, a plain-people's man  
 At the first glance, a more deliberate  
     ken  
 Finds type primeval, theirs in whose veins  
     ran  
 Such blood as quelled the dragon in his  
     den,  
 Made harmless fields, and better worlds  
     began:  
 He came grim-silent, saw and did the  
     deed<sup>50</sup>  
 That was to do; in his master-grip  
 Our sword flashed joy; no skill of words  
     could breed  
 Such sure conviction as that close-clamped  
     lip;  
 He slew our dragon, nor, so seemed it,  
     knew  
 He had done more than any simplest man  
     might do.

Yet did this man, war-tempered, stern as  
     steel  
 Where steel opposed, prove soft in civil  
     sway;  
 The hand hilt-hardened had lost tact to  
     feel  
 The world's base coin, and glozing knaves  
     made prey  
 Of him and of the entrusted Common-  
     weal;<sup>60</sup>  
 So Truth insists and will not be denied.  
 We turn our eyes away, and so will  
     Fame,  
 As if in his last battle he had died  
 Victor for us and spotless of all blame,  
 Doer of hopeless tasks which praters shirk,  
 One of those still plain men that do the  
     world's rough work.

1891.

1892.

## WALT WHITMAN

[The selections from Whitman are printed by the kind permission of Messrs. Small, Maynard & Co., the authorized publishers of his works; and of Messrs. Horace L. Traubel and Thomas B. Harned, his literary executors.]

### THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH<sup>1</sup>

THERE was a child went forth every day,  
And the first object he look'd upon, that  
object he became,  
And that object became part of him for the  
day or a certain part of the day,  
Or for many years or stretching cycles of  
years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,  
And grass and white and red morning-  
glories, and white and red clover, and the  
song of the phoebe-bird,  
And the Third-month lambs and the sow's  
pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal and  
the cow's calf,  
And the noisy brood of the barnyard or by  
the mire of the pond-side,  
And the fish suspending themselves so  
curiously below there, and the beautiful  
curious liquid,  
And the water-plants with their graceful  
flat heads, all became part of him. 10

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and  
Fifth-month became part of him,  
Winter-grain sprouts and those of the  
light-yellow corn, and the esculent roots  
of the garden,  
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms  
and the fruit afterward, and wood-ber-  
ries, and the commonest weeds by the  
road,  
And the old drunkard staggering home from  
the outhouse of the tavern whence he  
had lately risen,  
And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her  
way to the school,

<sup>1</sup> In the first edition, 1855, without title. In the second edition, 1856, called 'Poem of The Child That Went Forth and Always Goes Forth Forever and For-ever.'

And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls, and  
the barefoot negro boy and girl,  
And all the changes of city and country  
wherever he went.  
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the  
quarrelsome boys,  
His own parents, he that had father'd him  
and she that had conceiv'd him in her  
womb and birth'd him,  
They gave this child more of themselves  
than that, 20  
They gave him afterward every day, they  
became part of him.

The mother at home quietly placing the  
dishes on the supper-table,  
The mother with mild words, clean her cap  
and gown, a wholesome odor falling off  
her person and clothes as she walks by,  
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly,  
mean, anger'd, unjust,  
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight  
bargain, the crafty lure,  
The family usages, the language, the com-  
pany, the furniture, the yearning and  
swelling heart,  
Affection that will not be gainsay'd, the  
sense of what is real, the thought if after  
all it should prove unreal,  
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of  
night-time, the curious whether and how,  
Whether that which appears so is so, or is  
it all flashes and specks?  
Men and women crowding fast in the streets,  
if they are not flashes and specks what  
are they? 30  
The streets themselves and the façades of  
houses, and goods in the windows,  
Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves,  
the huge crossing at the ferries,  
The village on the highland seen from afar  
at sunset, the river between,  
Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling  
on roofs and gables of white or brown two  
miles off,

The schooner near by sleepily dropping  
down the tide, the little boat slack-tow'd  
astern,  
The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken  
crests, slapping,  
The strata of color'd clouds, the long bar of  
maroon-tint away solitary by itself, the  
spread of purity it lies motionless in,  
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the  
fragrance of salt marsh and shore mud,  
These became part of that child who went  
forth every day, and who now goes, and  
will always go forth every day.<sup>1</sup>

1855.

SONG OF MYSELF<sup>2</sup>

I

I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume,  
For every atom belonging to me as good  
belongs to you.

<sup>1</sup> In the early editions, the following line was added  
at the end of the poem: —

And these become part of him or her that peruses them now.

<sup>2</sup> In 1855, without title. In 1856, as the 'Poem of  
Walt Whitman, an American.' In the third edition, 1860,  
with the title, 'Walt Whitman,' and so in the following  
editions until 1881, when the present title was first  
used.

The sections were first numbered in 1867.

It must be noted from the beginning that Whitman  
celebrates himself not as an isolated individual, but  
as the type of all individual selves, claiming for them  
all absolute equality. Compare the poem beginning: —

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,  
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

One of Whitman's early fragments (*Notes and Fragments*, p. 36, no. 112) reads: —

I celebrate myself to celebrate you;  
I say the same word for every man and woman living.

Compare also Whitman's Preface to the 1876 edition  
of *Leaves of Grass*: 'Then I meant "Leaves of Grass,"  
as published, to be the Poem of average Identity (of  
yours, whoever you are, now reading these lines). . . .  
All serves, helps — but in the centre of all, absorbing  
all, giving, for your purpose, the only meaning and vi-  
tality to all, master or mistress of all, under the law,  
stands Yourself. To sing the Song of that law of aver-  
age Identity, and of Yourself, consistently with the  
divine law of the universal, is a main intention of these  
"Leaves."'

In his 'myself' he means to picture the typical demo-  
cratic self. It was both by temperament, and also with  
a definite purpose in view, that he chose to speak in  
the first person. One of his early fragmentary notes  
reads: 'Ego-style. First-person-style. Style of com-  
position an animated ego-style — "I do not think" "I  
perceive" — or something involving self-esteem, de-  
cision, authority — as opposed to the current *third per-  
son style*, *essayism*, *didactic*, removed from animation,  
stating general truths in a didactic, well-smoothed . . .'  
(*Notes and Fragments*, p. 179.)

I loafe and invite my soul,  
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a  
spear of summer grass.

My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd  
from this soil, this air,  
Born here of parents born here from par-  
ents the same, and their parents the same,  
I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect  
health begin,  
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance,  
Retiring back a while sufficed at what they  
are, but never forgotten,  
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak  
at every hazard,  
Nature without check with original energy.<sup>3</sup>

6

A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it  
to me with full hands;  
How could I answer the child? I do not  
know what it is any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition,  
out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the  
Lord,  
A scented gift and remembrancer design-  
edly dropt,  
Bearing the owner's name someway in the  
corners, that we may see and remark, and  
say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the  
produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,  
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad  
zones and narrow zones,  
Growing among black folks as among white,  
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I  
give them the same, I receive them the  
same.

11

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut  
hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you curling grass,  
It may be you transpire from the breasts of  
young men,

<sup>3</sup> The last eight lines of section 1 are not found in  
the earlier editions, and were not added until 1881.

It may be if I had known them I would  
have loved them,  
It may be you are from old people, or from  
offspring taken soon out of their mothers'  
laps,  
And here you are the mothers' laps.

This grass is very dark to be from the  
white heads of old mothers,  
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,  
Dark to come from under the faint red  
roofs of mouths. 20

O I perceive after all so many uttering  
tongues,  
And I perceive they do not come from the  
roofs of mouths for nothing.

I wish I could translate the hints about the  
dead young men and women,  
And the hints about old men and mothers,  
and the offspring taken soon out of their  
laps.

What do you think has become of the young  
and old men?  
And what do you think has become of the  
women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere,  
The smallest sprout shows there is really  
no death,  
And if ever there was it led forward life,  
and does not wait at the end to arrest it,  
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd. 30

All goes onward and outward, nothing col-  
lapses,  
And to die is different from what any one  
supposed, and luckier.

7

Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?  
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as  
lucky to die, and I know it.

I pass death with the dying and birth with  
the new-wash'd babe, and am not con-  
tain'd between my hat and boots,  
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike  
and every one good,  
The earth good and the stars good, and their  
adjuncts all good.

I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an  
earth,

I am the mate and companion of people, all  
just as immortal and fathomless as my-  
self,  
(They do not know how immortal, but I  
know.)

Every kind for itself and its own, for me  
mine male and female,  
For me those that have been boys and that  
love women,  
For me the man that is proud and feels how  
it stings to be slighted,  
For me the sweet-heart and the old maid,  
for me mothers and the mothers of  
mothers,  
For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have  
shed tears,  
For me children and the begetters of chil-  
dren.

Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor  
stale nor discarded,  
I see through the broadcloth and gingham  
whether or no,  
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tire-  
less, and cannot be shaken away.

8

The little one sleeps in its cradle,  
I lift the gauze and look a long time, and  
silently brush away flies with my hand.

The youngster and the red-faced girl turn  
aside up the bushy hill,  
I peeringly view them from the top.

The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of  
the bedroom,  
I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair,  
I note where the pistol has fallen.

. . . . .

9

The big doors of the country barn stand  
open and ready,  
The dried grass of the harvest-time loads  
the slow-drawn wagon,  
The clear light plays on the brown gray  
and green intertinged,  
The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging  
mow.

I am there, I help, I came stretch'd atop  
of the load,  
I felt its soft jolts, one leg reclined on the  
other,

I jump from the cross-beams and seize the  
clover and timothy,  
And roll head over heels and tangle my  
hair full of wisps.

10

Alone far in the wilds and mountains I  
hunt,  
Wandering amazed at my own lightness  
and glee,  
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot  
to pass the night,  
Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill'd  
game,  
Falling asleep on the gather'd leaves with  
my dog and gun by my side.

The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails,  
she cuts the sparkle and scud,  
My eyes settle the land, I bend at her prow  
or shout joyously from the deck.

The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early  
and stopt for me,  
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots and  
went and had a good time;  
You should have been with us that day  
round the chowder-kettle. 10

I saw the marriage of the trapper in the  
open air in the far west, the bride was a  
red girl,  
Her father and her friends sat near cross-  
legged and dumbly smoking, they had  
moccasins to their feet and large thick  
blankets hanging from their shoulders,  
On a bank lounged the trapper, he was  
drest mostly in skins, his luxuriant beard  
and curls protected his neck, he held his  
bride by the hand,  
She had long eyelashes, her head was bare,  
her coarse straight locks descended upon  
her voluptuous limbs and reach'd to her  
feet.

The runaway slave came to my house and  
stopt outside,  
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of  
the woodpile,  
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen  
I saw him limpsy and weak,  
And went where he sat on a log and led  
him in and assured him,  
And brought water and fill'd a tub for his  
sweated body and bruised feet,

And gave him a room that enter'd from my  
own, and gave him some coarse clean  
clothes, 20  
And remember perfectly well his revolving  
eyes and his awkwardness,  
And remember putting plasters on the galls  
of his neck and ankles;  
He staid with me a week before he was re-  
cuperated and pass'd north,  
I had him sit next me at table, my fire-lock  
lean'd in the corner.

. . . . .

14

The wild gander leads his flock through the  
cool night,  
Ya-honk he says, and sounds it down to me  
like an invitation,  
The pert may suppose it meaningless, but  
I, listening close,  
Find its purpose and place up there toward  
the wintry sky.  
The sharp-hoof'd moose of the north, the  
cat on the house-sill, the chickadee, the  
prairie-dog,  
The litter of the grunting sow as they tug  
at her teats,  
The brood of the turkey-hen and she with  
her half-spread wings,  
I see in them and myself the same old law.

The press of my foot to the earth springs a  
hundred affections,  
They scorn the best I can do to relate them.

I am enamour'd of growing out-doors, 11  
Of men that live among cattle or taste of  
the ocean or woods,  
Of the builders and steerers of ships and  
the wielders of axes and mauls, and the  
drivers of horses,  
I can eat and sleep with them week in and  
week out.

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easi-  
est, is Me,  
Me going in for my chances, spending for  
vast returns,  
Adorning myself to bestow myself on the  
first that will take me,  
Not asking the sky to come down to my  
good will,  
Scattering it freely forever.

. . . . .



16

I am of old and young, of the foolish as  
 much as the wise,  
 Regardless of others, ever regardful of  
 others,  
 Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well  
 as a man,  
 Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse and  
 stuff'd with the stuff that is fine,  
 One of the Nation of many nations, the  
 smallest the same and the largest the  
 same,  
 A Southerner soon as a Northerner, a  
 planter nonchalant and hospitable down  
 by the Oconee I live,  
 A Yankee bound my own way ready for  
 trade, my joints the limberest joints on  
 earth and the sternest joints on earth,  
 A Kentuckian walking the vale of the Elk-  
 horn in my deer-skin leggings, a Louisi-  
 anian or Georgian,  
 A boatman over lakes or bays or along  
 coasts, a Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye;  
 At home on Kanadian snow-shoes or up in  
 the bush, or with fishermen off New-  
 foundland,  
 At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing  
 with the rest and tacking,  
 At home on the hills of Vermont or in the  
 woods of Maine, or the Texan ranch,  
 Comrade of Californians, comrade of free  
 North-Westerners (loving their big pro-  
 portions),  
 Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, com-  
 rade of all who shake hands and welcome  
 to drink and meat,  
 A learner with the simplest, a teacher of  
 the thoughtfulest,  
 A novice beginning yet experient of myriads  
 of seasons,  
 Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank  
 and religion,  
 A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman,  
 sailor, quaker,  
 Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physi-  
 cian, priest.

I resist any thing better than my own  
 diversity,  
 Breathe the air but leave plenty after me,  
 And am not stuck up, and am in my  
 place.

(The moth and the fish-eggs are in their  
 place,

The bright suns I see and the dark suns I  
 cannot see are in their place,  
 The palpable is in its place and the impal-  
 pable is in its place.)

17

These are really the thoughts of all men in  
 all ages and lands, they are not original  
 with me,  
 If they are not yours as much as mine they  
 are nothing, or next to nothing,  
 If they are not the riddle and the untying  
 of the riddle they are nothing,  
 If they are not just as close as they are  
 distant they are nothing.

This is the grass that grows wherever the  
 land is and the water is,  
 This the common air that bathes the  
 globe.

18

With music strong I come, with my cornets  
 and my drums,  
 I play not marches for accepted victors  
 only, I play marches for conquer'd and  
 slain persons.<sup>1</sup>

Have you heard that it was good to gain  
 the day?  
 I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost  
 in the same spirit in which they are  
 won.

I beat and pound for the dead,  
 I blow through my embouchures my loud-  
 est and gayest for them.<sup>2</sup>

Vivas to those who have fail'd !  
 And to those whose war-vessels sank in the  
 sea !  
 And to those themselves who sank in the  
 sea !

<sup>1</sup> Instead of these two lines, the original edition has:

This is the breath of laws and songs and behaviour,  
 This is the tasteless water of souls . . . this is the true es-  
 tenance,  
 It is for the illiterate . . . it is for the judges of the supreme  
 court . . . it is for the federal capitol and the state capitols.  
 It is for the admirable communes of literary men and com-  
 posers and singers and lecturers and engineers and aviators,  
 It is for the endless races of working people and farmers and  
 seamen.  
 This is the trill of a thousand clear cornets and scream of the  
 octave flute and strike of triangles.  
 I play not a march for victors only . . . I play great marches  
 for conquered and slain persons.

<sup>2</sup> I sound triumphal drums for the dead.  
 I sing through my embouchures the loudest and gayest  
 music to them. (1886.)

And to all generals that lost engagements,  
and all overcome heroes !  
And the numberless unknown heroes equal  
to the greatest heroes known !

20

In all people I see myself, none more and  
not one a barley-corn less,  
And the good or bad I say of myself I say  
of them.

I know I am solid and sound,  
To me the converging objects of the uni-  
verse perpetually flow,  
All are written to me, and I must get what  
the writing means.

I know I am deathless,  
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept  
by a carpenter's compass,  
I know I shall not pass like a child's carla-  
cue cut with a burnt stick at night.

I know I am august,  
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself  
or be understood, <sup>10</sup>  
I see that the elementary laws never apolo-  
gize,  
(I reckon I behave no prouder than the  
level I plant my house by, after all.)

I exist as I am, that is enough,  
If no other in the world be aware I sit  
content,  
And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest  
to me, and that is myself,  
And whether I come to my own to-day or  
in ten thousand or ten million years,  
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal  
cheerfulness I can wait.

My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in  
granite,  
I laugh at what you call dissolution, <sup>20</sup>  
And I know the amplitude of time.

21

I am the poet of the Body and I am the  
poet of the Soul,  
The pleasures of heaven are with me and  
the pains of hell are with me,

The first I graft and increase upon myself,  
the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as  
the man,  
And I say it is as great to be a woman as  
to be a man,  
And I say there is nothing greater than the  
mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride,<sup>1</sup>  
We have had ducking and deprecating  
about enough,  
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest ? are you the  
President ? <sup>10</sup>  
It is a trifle, they will more than arrive  
there every one, and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and  
growing night,<sup>2</sup>  
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the  
night.  
Press close bare-bosom'd night — press  
close magnetic nourishing night !  
Night of south winds — night of the large  
few stars !  
Still nodding night — mad naked summer  
night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breath'd earth !  
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees !  
Earth of departed sunset — earth of the  
mountains misty-topt !

<sup>1</sup> Among Whitman's early memoranda of the essen-  
tial things not to be omitted from *Leaves of Grass* we  
find: 'Boldness — Nonchalant ease and indifference.  
To encourage me or any one else continually to strike  
out alone.' (*Notes and Fragments*, p. 57.)

<sup>2</sup> The original form of this beautiful apostrophe to  
Night is to be found in *Notes and Fragments*, p. 17: —

Night of south winds — night of the large few stars !  
Still slumberous night — mad, naked summer night !

Smile, O voluptuous, procreant earth !  
Earth of the nodding and liquid trees !  
Earth of the mountains, misty-top't  
Earth of departed sunset — Earth of shine and dark, mottling  
the tide of the river !  
Earth of the vitreous fall of the full moon just tinged with  
blue !  
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds purer and clearer for my  
sake !  
Earth of far arms — rich, apple-blossomed earth !  
Smile, for your lover comes !

Spread round me earth ! Spread with your curtained hours ;  
Take me as many a time you 've taken ;  
Till springing up in . . .

Prodigal, you have given me love ;  
Sustenance, happiness, health have given ;  
Therefore I to you give love ;  
O unspeakable, passionate love !

Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon  
just tinged with blue !  
Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide  
of the river !  
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter  
and clearer for my sake !  
Far-swooping elbow'd earth — rich apple-  
blossom'd earth !  
Smile, for your lover comes.

Prodigal, you have given me love — there-  
fore I to you give love !  
O unspeakable passionate love !

22

You sea ! I resign myself to you also — I  
guess what you mean,  
I behold from the beach your crooked in-  
viting fingers,  
I believe you refuse to go back without  
feeling of me,  
We must have a turn together, I undress,  
hurry me out of sight of the land,  
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy  
drowse,  
Dash me with amorous wet, I can repay  
you.

Sea of stretch'd ground-swells,  
Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths,  
Sea of the brine of life and of unshovell'd  
yet always-ready graves,  
Howler and scooper of storms, capricious  
and dainty sea,  
I am integral with you, I too am of one  
phase and of all phases.

30

All truths wait in all things,  
They neither hasten their own delivery nor  
resist it,  
They do not need the obstetric forceps of  
the surgeon,  
The insignificant is as big to me as any,  
(What is less or more than a touch ?)

Logic and sermons never convince,  
The damp of the night drives deeper into  
my soul.

(Only what proves itself to every man and  
woman is so,  
Only what nobody denies is so.)

A minute and a drop of me settle my  
brain,  
I believe the soggy clods shall become  
lovers and lamps,  
And a compend of compends is the meat of  
a man or woman,  
And a summit and flower there is the feel-  
ing they have for each other,  
And they are to branch boundlessly out of  
that lesson until it becomes omnific,  
And until one and all shall delight us, and  
we them.

31

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the  
journey-work of the stars,  
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a  
grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,  
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre for the  
highest,  
And the running blackberry would adorn  
the parlors of heaven,  
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts  
to scorn all machinery,  
And the cow crunching with depress'd head  
surpasses any statue,  
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger  
sextillions of infidels.

. . . . .

33

Space and Time ! now I see it is true, what  
I guess'd at,  
What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass,  
What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed,  
And again as I walk'd the beach under the  
paling stars of the morning.

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows  
rest in sea-gaps,  
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents,  
I am afoot with my vision.

By the city's quadrangular houses — in log  
huts, camping with lumbermen,  
Along the ruts of the turnpike, along the dry  
gulch and rivulet bed,  
Weeding my onion-patch or hoeing rows of  
carrots and parsnips, crossing savannas,  
trailing in forests,  
Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees  
of a new purchase,  
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand, haul-  
ing my boat down the shallow river,

Where the panther walks to and fro on  
 a limb overhead, where the buck turns  
 furiously at the hunter,  
 Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length  
 on a rock, where the otter is feeding on  
 fish,  
 Where the alligator in his tough pimples  
 sleeps by the bayou,  
 Where the black bear is searching for roots  
 or honey, where the beaver pats the mud  
 with his paddle-shaped tail;  
 Over the growing sugar, over the yellow-  
 flower'd cotton plant, over the rice in its  
 low moist field,  
 Over the sharp-peak'd farm house, with its  
 scallop'd scum and slender shoots from  
 the gutters,  
 Over the western persimmon, over the long-  
 leav'd corn, over the delicate blue-flower  
 flax,  
 Over the white and brown buckwheat, a  
 hummer and buzzer there with the rest,  
 Over the dusky green of the rye as it rip-  
 ples and shades in the breeze; <sup>21</sup>  
 Scaling mountains, pulling myself cau-  
 tiously up, holding on by low scragged  
 limbs,  
 Walking the path worn in the grass and  
 beat through the leaves of the brush,  
 Where the quail is whistling betwixt the  
 woods and the wheat-lot,  
 Where the bat flies in the Seventh-month  
 eve, where the great gold-bug drops  
 through the dark,  
 Where the brook puts out of the roots of  
 the old tree and flows to the meadow,  
 Where cattle stand and shake away flies  
 with the tremulous shuddering of their  
 hides,  
 Where the cheese-cloth hangs in the kitchen,  
 where andirons straddle the hearth-slab,  
 where cobwebs fall in festoons from the  
 rafters;  
 Where trip-hammers crash, where the press  
 is whirling its cylinders,  
 Wherever the human heart beats with ter-  
 rible throes under its ribs, <sup>30</sup>  
 Where the pear-shaped balloon is floating  
 aloft (floating in it myself and looking  
 composedly down),  
 Where the life-car is drawn on the slip-  
 noose, where the heat hatches pale-green  
 eggs in the dented sand,  
 Where the she-whale swims with her calf  
 and never forsakes it,

Where the steam-ship trails hind-ways its  
 long pennant of smoke,  
 Where the fin of the shark cuts like a black  
 chip out of the water,  
 Where the half-burn'd brig is riding on un-  
 known currents,  
 Where shells grow to her slimy deck, where  
 the dead are corrupting below;  
 Where the dense-starr'd flag is borne at the  
 head of the regiments,  
 Approaching Manhattan up by the long-  
 stretching island,  
 Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a  
 veil over my countenance, <sup>40</sup>  
 Upon a door-step, upon the horse-block of  
 hard wood outside,  
 Upon the race-course, or enjoying pic-  
 nics or jigs or a good game of base-  
 ball,  
 At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironi-  
 cal license, bull-dances, drinking, laugh-  
 ter,  
 At the cider-mill tasting the sweets of the  
 brown mash, sucking the juice through a  
 straw,  
 At apple-peelings wanting kisses for all the  
 red fruit I find,  
 At musters, beach-parties, friendly bees,  
 huskings, house-raising;  
 Where the mocking-bird sounds his deli-  
 cious gurgles, cackles, screams, weeps,  
 Where the hay-rick stands in the barn-yard,  
 where the dry-stalks are scatter'd, where  
 the brood-cow waits in the hovel,  
 Where the bull advances to do his mascu-  
 line work, where the stud to the mare,  
 where the cock is treading the hen,  
 Where the heifers browse, where geese  
 nip their food with short jerks, <sup>50</sup>  
 Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the  
 limitless and lonesome prairie,  
 Where herds of buffalo make a crawling  
 spread of the square miles far and near,  
 Where the humming-bird shimmers, where  
 the neck of the long-lived swan is curv-  
 ing and winding,  
 Where the laughing-gull scoots by the  
 shore, where she laughs her near-human  
 laugh,  
 Where bee-hives range on a gray bench in  
 the garden half hid by the high weeds,  
 Where band-neck'd partridges roost in a  
 ring on the ground with their heads out,  
 Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates  
 of a cemetery,

Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of  
 snow and icicled trees,  
 Where the yellow-crown'd heron comes to  
 the edge of the marsh at night and feeds  
 upon small crabs,  
 Where the splash of swimmers and divers  
 cools the warm noon, 60  
 Where the katy-did works her chromatic  
 reed on the walnut-tree over the well,  
 Through patches of citrons and cucumbers  
 with silver-wired leaves,  
 Through the salt-lick or orange glade, or  
 under conical firs,  
 Through the gymnasium, through the cur-  
 tain'd saloon, through the office or public  
 hall;  
 Pleas'd with the native and pleas'd with the  
 foreign, pleas'd with the new and old,  
 Pleas'd with the homely woman as well as  
 the handsome,  
 Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off  
 her bonnet and talks melodiously,  
 Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the  
 whitewash'd church,  
 Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweat-  
 ing Methodist preacher, impress'd seri-  
 ously at the camp-meeting;  
 Looking in at the shop-windows of Broad-  
 way the whole forenoon, flattening the flesh  
 of my nose on the thick plate glass, 70  
 Wandering the same afternoon with my  
 face turn'd up to the clouds, or down a  
 lane or along the beach,  
 My right and left arms round the sides of  
 two friends, and I in the middle;  
 Coming home with the silent and dark-  
 cheek'd bush-boy, (behind me he rides at  
 the drape of the day,)  
 Far from the settlements studying the  
 print of animals' feet, or the moccasin  
 print,  
 By the cot in the hospital reaching lemon-  
 ade to a feverish patient,  
 Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is still,  
 examining with a candle;  
 Voyaging to every port to dicker and ad-  
 venture,  
 Hurrying with the modern crowd as eager  
 and fickle as any,  
 Hot toward one I hate, ready in my mad-  
 ness to knife him,  
 Solitary at midnight in my back yard, my  
 thoughts gone from me a long while, 80  
 Walking the old hills of Judæa with the  
 beautiful gentle God by my side,

Speeding through space, speeding through  
 heaven and the stars,  
 Speeding amid the seven satellites and the  
 broad ring, and the diameter of eighty  
 thousand miles,  
 Speeding with tail'd meteors, throwing fire-  
 balls like the rest,  
 Carrying the crescent child that carries its  
 own full mother in its belly, <sup>1</sup>  
 Storming, enjoying, planning, loving, cau-  
 tioning,  
 Backing and filling, appearing and disap-  
 pearing,  
 I tread day and night such roads.

I visit the orchards of spheres and look at  
 the product, <sup>2</sup>  
 And look at quintillions ripen'd and look at  
 quintillions green. 90

I fly those flights of a fluid and swallowing  
 soul,  
 My course runs below the soundings of  
 plummets.

I help myself to material and immate-  
 rial,  
 No guard can shut me off, no law prevent  
 me.

I anchor my ship for a little while only,  
 My messengers continually cruise away or  
 bring their returns to me.

I go hunting polar furs and the seal, leaping  
 chasms with a pike pointed staff, clinging  
 to topples of brittle and blue.

I ascend to the foretruck,  
 I take my place late at night in the crow's-  
 nest,  
 We sail the arctic sea, it is plenty light  
 enough, 100  
 Through the clear atmosphere I stretch  
 around on the wonderful beauty,  
 The enormous masses of ice pass me and  
 I pass them, the scenery is plain in all  
 directions,  
 The white-topt mountains show in the dis-  
 tance, I fling out my fancies toward them,

<sup>1</sup> Compare the old ballad:—

Last night I saw the new moon  
 With the old moon in her arms.

<sup>2</sup> I visit the orchards of God and look at the spheric pro-  
 duct. (1855.)

**We** are approaching some great battle-field in which we are soon to be engaged,  
**We** pass the colossal outposts of the encampment, we pass with still feet and caution,

**Or** we are entering by the suburbs some vast and ruin'd city,

**The** blocks and fallen architecture more than all the living cities of the globe.

**I** understand the large hearts of heroes,  
**The** courage of present times and all times,  
**How** the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steam-ship, and  
**Death** chasing it up and down the storm,  
**How** he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was faithful of days and faithful of nights,

**And** chalk'd in large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will not desert you ;*

**How** he follow'd with them and tack'd with them three days and would not give it up,

**How** he saved the drifting company at last,

**How** the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated from the side of their prepared graves,

**How** the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the sharp-lipp'd unshaved men;

**All** this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,

**I** am the man, I suffer'd, I was there.

**The** disdain and calmness of martyrs,  
**The** mother of old, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry wood, her children gazing on,

**The** hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blowing, cover'd with sweat,

**The** twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the murderous buckshot and the bullets,

**All** these I feel or am.

**I** am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,

**Hell** and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksmen,

**I** clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze of my skin,

**I** fall on the weeds and stones,

**The** riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,

**Taunt** my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks.

**Agonies** are one of my changes of garments,

**I** do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person,

**My** hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

**I** am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken,

**Tumbling** walls buried me in their débris, Heat and smoke I inspired, I heard the yelling shouts of my comrades,

**I** heard the distant click of their picks and shovels,

**They** have clear'd the beams away, they tenderly lift me forth.

**I** lie in the night air in my red shirt, the pervading hush is for my sake,

**Painless** after all I lie exhausted but not so unhappy,

**White** and beautiful are the faces around me, the heads are bared of their fire-caps,

**The** kneeling crowd fades with the light of the torches.

**Distant** and dead resuscitate,

**They** show as the dial or move as the hands of me, I am the clock myself.

**I** am an old artillerist, I tell of my fort's bombardment,

**I** am there again.

**Again** the long roll of the drummers,

**Again** the attacking cannon, mortars,

**Again** to my listening ears the cannon responsive.

**I** take part, I see and hear the whole,

**The** cries, curses, roar, the plaudits for well-aim'd shots,

**The** ambulanza slowly passing trailing its red drip,

**Workmen** searching after damages, making indispensable repairs,

**The** fall of grenades through the rent roof, the fan-shaped explosion,

**The** whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.



Again gurgles the mouth of my dying  
 general, he furiously waves with his  
 hand,  
 He gasps through the clot *Mind not me —*  
*mind — the entrenchments.*

34

Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my  
 early youth,<sup>1</sup>  
 (I tell not the fall of Alamo,  
 Not one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo,  
 The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at  
 Alamo,)  
 'T is the tale of the murder in cold blood of  
 four hundred and twelve young men.

Retreating they had form'd in a hollow  
 square with their baggage for breast-  
 works,  
 Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding  
 enemies, nine times their number, was  
 the price they took in advance,  
 Their colonel was wounded and their am-  
 munition gone,  
 They treated for an honorable capitulation,  
 receiv'd writing and seal, gave up their  
 arms and march'd back prisoners of war.

They were the glory of the race of ran-  
 gers,  
 Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper,  
 courtship,  
 Large, turbulent, generous, handsome,  
 proud, and affectionate,  
 Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free cos-  
 tume of hunters,  
 Not a single one over thirty years of age.

The second First-day morning they were  
 brought out in squads and massacred, it  
 was beautiful early summer,  
 The work commenced about five o'clock and  
 was over by eight.

None obey'd the command to kneel,  
 Some made a mad and helpless rush, some  
 stood stark and straight,  
 A few fell at once, shot in the temple or  
 heart, the living and dead lay together,

<sup>1</sup> Instead of the first five lines of this section, the  
 original edition has: —

I tell not the fall of Alamo . . . not one escaped to tell the  
 fall of Alamo,  
 The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo.

Hear now the tale of a jet-black sunrise,  
 Hear of the murder in cold-blood of four hundred and twelve  
 young men.

The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt,  
 the new-comers saw them there,  
 Some half-kill'd attempted to crawl away,  
 These were despatch'd with bayonets or  
 batter'd with the blunts of muskets,  
 A youth not seventeen years old seiz'd his  
 assassin till two more came to release  
 him,  
 The three were all torn and cover'd with  
 the boy's blood.

At eleven o'clock began the burning of the  
 bodies;  
 That is the tale of the murder of the four  
 hundred and twelve young men.<sup>2</sup>

35

Would you hear of an old-time sea-  
 fight?<sup>3</sup>  
 Would you learn who won by the light of  
 the moon and stars?  
 List to the yarn, as my grandmother's  
 father the sailor told it to me.

Our foe was no skulk in his ship I tell you  
 (said he),  
 His was the surly English pluck, and there  
 is no tougher or truer, and never was,  
 and never will be;  
 Along the lower'd eve he came horribly  
 raking us.

We closed with him, the yards entangled,  
 the cannon touch'd,  
 My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots  
 under the water,  
 On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces  
 had burst at the first fire, killing all  
 around and blowing up overhead.<sup>10</sup>

Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark,  
 Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up,  
 our leaks on the gain, and five feet of  
 water reported,  
 The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners  
 confined in the after-hold to give them a  
 chance for themselves.

<sup>2</sup> In the original edition there was added the line: —

And that was a jet-black sunrise.

<sup>3</sup> Did you read in the sea-books of the old-fashioned frigate-  
 fight? (1855.)



The transit to and from the magazine is  
now stopt by the sentinels,  
They see so many strange faces they do  
not know whom to trust.

Our frigate takes fire,  
The other asks if we demand quarter?  
If our colors are struck and the fighting  
done?

Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice  
of my little captain,  
*We have not struck*, he composedly cries,  
*we have just begun our part of the fight-*  
*ing.*

Only three guns are in use, <sup>21</sup>  
One is directed by the captain himself  
against the enemy's mainmast,  
Two well serv'd with grape and canister  
silence his musketry and clear his decks.

The tops alone second the fire of this little  
battery, especially the main-top,  
They hold out bravely during the whole of  
the action.

Not a moment's cease,  
The leaks gain fast on the pumps, the fire  
eats toward the powder-magazine.

One of the pumps has been shot away, it is  
generally thought we are sinking.

Serene stands the little captain,  
He is not hurried, his voice is neither high  
nor low, <sup>30</sup>  
His eyes give more light to us than our  
battle-lanterns.

Toward twelve there in the beams of the  
moon they surrender to us.

36

Stretch'd and still lies the midnight,  
Two great hulls motionless on the breast of  
the darkness,  
Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking,  
preparations to pass to the one we have  
conquer'd,  
The captain on the quarter-deck coldly  
giving his orders through a countenance  
white as a sheet,  
Near by the corpse of the child that serv'd  
in the cabin,

The dead face of an old salt with long white  
hair and carefully curl'd whiskers,  
The flames spite of all that can be done  
flickering aloft and below,  
The husky voices of the two or three offi-  
cers yet fit for duty,  
Formless stacks of bodies and bodies by  
themselves, dabs of flesh upon the masts  
and spars,  
Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight  
shock of the soothe of waves,  
Black and impassive guns, litter of pow-  
der-parcels, strong scent,  
A few large stars overhead, silent and  
mournful shining,  
Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy  
grass and fields by the shore, death-mes-  
sages given in charge to survivors,  
The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnaw-  
ing teeth of his saw,  
Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short  
wild scream, and long, dull, tapering  
groan,  
These so, these irretrievable.

. . . . .

44

It is time to explain myself — let us stand  
up.

What is known I strip away,  
I launch all men and women forward with  
me into the Unknown.

The clock indicates the moment — but what  
does eternity indicate? <sup>1</sup>

We have thus far exhausted trillions of  
winters and summers,  
There are trillions ahead, and trillions  
ahead of them.

Births have brought us richness and va-  
riety,  
And other births will bring us richness and  
variety.

I do not call one greater and one smaller,  
That which fills its period and place is equal  
to any. <sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After this line there followed, in the original edi-  
tion, another paragraph of two lines: —

Eternity lies in bottomless reservoirs . . . its buckets are  
rising forever and ever,  
They pour and they pour and they exhale away.

Were mankind murderous or jealous upon  
you, my brother, my sister?  
I am sorry for you, they are not murder-  
ous or jealous upon me,  
All has been gentle with me, I keep no ac-  
count with lamentation,  
(What have I to do with lamenta-  
tion?)

I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and  
I an encloser of things to be.

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the  
stairs,  
On every step bunches of ages, and larger  
bunches between the steps,  
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount  
and mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind  
me,  
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I  
know I was even there,  
I waited unseen and always, and slept<sup>20</sup>  
through the lethargic mist,<sup>1</sup>  
And took my time, and took no hurt from  
the fetid carbon.

Long I was hugg'd close — long and long.

Immense have been the preparations for  
me,  
Faithful and friendly the arms that have  
help'd me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and row-  
ing like cheerful boatmen,  
For room to me stars kept aside in their  
own rings,  
They sent influences to look after what was  
to hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother gen-  
erations guided me,  
My embryo has never been torpid, nothing  
could overlay it.<sup>30</sup>

For it the nebula cohered to an orb,  
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,  
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,  
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their  
mouths and deposited it with care.

<sup>1</sup> I waited unseen and always, and slept while God car-  
ried me through the lethargic mist. (1855.)

All forces have been steadily employ'd to  
complete and delight me,  
Now on this spot I stand with my robust  
soul.

46

I know I have the best of time and space,  
and was never measured and never will  
be measured.

I tramp a perpetual journey, (come listen  
all !)  
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes,  
and a staff cut from the woods,  
No friend of mine takes his ease in my  
chair,  
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy,  
I lead no man to a dinner-table, library,  
exchange,  
But each man and each woman of you I  
lead upon a knoll,  
My left hand hooking you round the waist,  
My right hand pointing to landscapes of  
continents and the public road.

Not I, not any one else can travel that road  
for you,  
You must travel it for yourself.<sup>20</sup>

It is not far, it is within reach,  
Perhaps you have been on it since you were  
born and did not know,  
Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on  
land.

Shoulder your duds, dear son, and I will  
mine, and let us hasten forth,  
Wonderful cities and free nations we shall  
fetch as we go.

If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest  
the chuff of your hand on my hip,  
And in due time you shall repay the same  
service to me,  
For after we start we never lie by again.

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and  
look'd at the crowded heaven,<sup>20</sup>  
And I said to my spirit *When we become  
the enfolders of those orbs, and the plea-  
sure and knowledge of every thing in them,  
shall we be fill'd and satisfied then?*  
And my spirit said *No, we but level that lift  
to pass and continue beyond.*

You are also asking me questions and I hear  
you,  
I answer that I cannot answer, you must  
find out for yourself.

Sit a while dear son,  
Here are biscuits to eat and here is milk  
to drink,  
But as soon as you sleep and renew your-  
self in sweet clothes, I kiss you with a  
good-by kiss and open the gate for your  
egress hence.

Long enough have you dream'd contempt-  
ible dreams,  
Now I wash the gum from your eyes,  
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of  
the light and of every moment of your  
life. 30

Long have you timidly waded holding a  
plank by the shore,  
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,  
To jump off in the midst of the sea, rise  
again, nod to me, shout, and laughingly  
dash with your hair.

47

I am the teacher of athletes,  
He that by me spreads a wider breast  
than my own proves the width of my  
own,  
He most honors my style who learns under  
it to destroy the teacher.

The boy I love, the same becomes a man  
not through derived power, but in his  
own right,  
Wicked rather than virtuous out of confor-  
mity or fear,  
Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his  
steak,  
Unrequited love or a slight cutting him  
worse than sharp steel cuts,  
First-rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's  
eye, to sail a skiff, to sing a song or play  
on the banjo,  
Preferring scars and the beard and faces  
pitted with small-pox over all lather-  
ers,  
And those well-tann'd to those that keep  
out of the sun. 10

I teach straying from me, yet who can  
stray from me?

I follow you whoever you are from the  
present hour,  
My words itch at your ears till you under-  
stand them.

I do not say these things for a dollar or to  
fill up the time while I wait for a boat,  
(It is you talking just as much as myself,  
I act as the tongue of you,  
Tied in your mouth, in mine it begins to be  
loosen'd.)

I swear I will never again mention love or  
death inside a house,  
And I swear I will never translate myself  
at all, only to him or her who privately  
stays with me in the open air.

If you would understand me go to the  
heights or water-shore,  
The nearest gnat is an explanation, and a  
drop or motion of waves a key, 20  
The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second  
my words.

No shutter'd room or school can commune  
with me,  
But roughs and little children better than  
they.

The young mechanic is closest to me, he  
knows me well,  
The woodman that takes his axe and jug  
with him shall take me with him all day,  
The farm-boy ploughing in the field feels  
good at the sound of my voice,  
In vessels that sail my words sail, I go with  
fishermen and seamen and love them.

The soldier camp'd or upon the march is  
mine,  
On the night ere the pending battle many  
seek me, and I do not fail them,  
On that solemn night (it may be their last)  
those that know me seek me.<sup>1</sup> 30

My face rubs to the hunter's face when he  
lies down alone in his blanket,  
The driver thinking of me does not mind  
the jolt of his wagon,  
The young mother and old mother compre-  
hend me,  
The girl and the wife rest the needle a  
moment and forget where they are,  
They and all would resume what I have  
told them.

<sup>1</sup> These three lines appeared first in the edition of 1867.

48

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,<sup>1</sup>  
 And I have said that the body is not more than the soul,  
 And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,  
 And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud,  
 And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the earth,  
 And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds the learning of all times,  
 And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become a hero,  
 And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe,  
 And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes.

<sup>1</sup> Compare, in *Notes and Fragments*, p. 36, No. 112 of the 'First Drafts and Rejected Lines' for *Leaves of Grass*. Compare also, as the best possible commentary on this section, two passages of Whitman's prose, the first a note written probably between 1850 and 1855, the second from the Preface to the 1876 edition of *Leaves of Grass*: —

All through writings preserve the equilibrium of the truth that the material world, and all its laws, are as grand and superb as the spiritual world and all its laws. Most writers have disclaimed the physical world, and they have not over-estimated the other, or soul, but have under-estimated the corporeal. How shall my eye separate the beauty of the blossoming buckwheat field from the stalks and heads of tangible matter? How shall I know what the life is except as I see it in the flesh? I will not praise one without the other or more than the other.

Do not argue at all or compose proofs to demonstrate things. State nothing which it will not do to state as apparent to all eyes. (*Notes and Fragments*, p. 56.)

It was originally my intention, after chanting in 'Leaves of Grass' the songs of the body and existence, to then compose a further, equally needed volume, based on those convictions of perpetuity and conservation which, enveloping all precedents, make the unseen soul govern absolutely at last. I meant, while in a sort continuing the theme of my first chants, to shift the slides, and exhibit the problem and paradox of the same ardent and fully appointed personality entering the sphere of the resistless gravitation of spiritual law, and with cheerful face estimating death, not at all as the cessation, but as somehow what I feel it must be, the entrance upon by far the greatest part of existence, and something that life is at least as much for, as it is for itself. But the full construction of such a work is beyond my powers, and must remain for some bard in the future. The physical and the sensuous, in themselves or in their immediate continuations, retain holds upon me which I think are never entirely releas'd; and those holds I have not only not denied, but hardly wish'd to weaken. (*Complete Prose Works*, pp. 273, 274.)

And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,<sup>2</sup>

For I who am curious about each am not curious about God,  
 (No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.)

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,  
 Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?

I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and each moment then,  
 In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own face in the glass,  
 I find letters from God dropt in the street, and every one is sign'd by God's name,  
 And I leave them where they are, for I know that wheresoe'er I go,  
 Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

51

The past and present wilt — I have fill'd them, emptied them,  
 And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listener up there! what have you to confide to me?

Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening.

(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.)

<sup>2</sup> Compare the original sketch for these lines in *Notes and Fragments*, p. 24: —

There is no word in any tongue,  
 No array, no form of symbol,  
 To tell his infatuation  
 Who would define the scope and purpose of God.

Mostly this we have of God; we have man.  
 Lo, the Sun;  
 Its glory floods the moon  
 Which of a night shines in some turbid pool,  
 Shaken by coughing winds;  
 And there are sparkles mad and tossed and broken  
 And their archetype is the sun.

Of God I know not;  
 But this I know;  
 I can comprehend no being more wonderful than man;  
 Man, before the rage of whose passions the storms of Heaven are but a breath;  
 Before whose caprices the lightning is slow and less fatal;  
 Man, microcosm of all Creation's wildness, terror, beauty and power,  
 And whose folly and wickedness are in nothing else existent.

Do I contradict myself?  
 Very well then I contradict myself,  
 (I am large, I contain multitudes.)

I concentrate toward them that are nigh, I  
 wait on the door-slab.

Who has done his day's work? who will  
 soonest be through with his supper?  
 Who wishes to walk with me?

Will you speak before I am gone? will  
 you prove already too late?

52

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses  
 me, he complains of my gab and my  
 loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untrans-  
 latable,  
 I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs  
 of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The last scud of day holds back for me,  
 It flings my likeness after the rest and true  
 as any on the shadow'd wilds,  
 It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at  
 the runaway sun,  
 I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in  
 lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from  
 the grass I love,  
 If you want me again look for me under  
 your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am or what I  
 mean,  
 But I shall be good health to you neverthe-  
 less,  
 And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encour-  
 aged,  
 Missing me one place search another,  
 I stop somewhere waiting for you.

1855.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the original sketch for these lines, in  
*Notes and Fragments*, p. 38:—

The spotted hawk salutes the approaching night;  
 He sweeps by me and rebukes me hoarsely with his invita-  
 tion;  
 He complains with sarcastic voice of my lagging.

I feel apt to elip it and go;  
 I am not half tamed yet.

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD<sup>2</sup>

1

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open  
 road,  
 Healthy, free, the world before me,  
 The long brown path before me leading  
 wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I my-  
 self am good-fortune,  
 Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone  
 no more, need nothing,  
 Done with indoor complaints, libraries,  
 querulous criticisms,<sup>3</sup>  
 Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,  
 I do not want the constellations any nearer,  
 I know they are very well where they are,  
 I know they suffice for those who belong to  
 them.

11

(Still here I carry my old delicious bur-  
 dens,  
 I carry them, men and women, I carry  
 them with me wherever I go,  
 I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of  
 them,  
 I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them  
 in return.)

2

You road I enter upon and look around, I  
 believe you are not all that is here,  
 I believe that much unseen is also here.<sup>4</sup>

Here the profound lesson of reception, nor  
 preference nor denial,  
 The black with his woolly head, the felon,  
 the diseas'd, the illiterate person, are not  
 denied;  
 The birth, the hasting after the physician,  
 the beggar's tramp, the drunkard's stag-  
 ger, the laughing party of mechanics, 20

<sup>2</sup> A great recreation, the past three years, has been  
 in taking long walks out from Washington, five, seven,  
 perhaps ten miles and back; generally with my friend  
 Peter Doyle, who is as fond of it as I am. Fine moon-  
 light nights, over the perfect military roads, hard and  
 smooth—or Sundays—we had these delightful walks,  
 never to be forgotten. (WHITMAN, *Specimen Days*,  
 December 10th, 1865. Complete Prose Works, p. 70.)

This poem first appeared in 1856, with the title 'Poem  
 of the Road.'

<sup>3</sup> This line was added in the edition of 1881.

<sup>4</sup> In the first form of the poem, 1856, this line read:

I believe that something unseen is also here.

The escaped youth, the rich person's carriage, the fop, the eloping couple,  
The early market-man, the hearse, the moving of furniture into the town, the return back from the town,  
They pass, I also pass, any thing passes, none can be interdicted,  
None but are accepted, none but shall be dear to me.

3

You air that serves me with breath to speak !  
You objects that call from diffusion my meanings and give them shape !  
You light that wraps me and all things in delicate equable showers !<sup>1</sup>  
You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the roadsides !  
I believe you are latent with unseen existences, you are so dear to me.

You flagg'd walks of the cities ! you strong curbs at the edges !  
You ferries ! you planks and posts of wharves ! you timber-lined sides ! you distant ships !  
You rows of houses ! you window-pierc'd façades ! you roofs !  
You porches and entrances ! you copings and iron guards !  
You windows whose transparent shells might expose so much !  
You doors and ascending steps ! you arches !  
You gray stones of interminable pavements ! you trodden crossings !  
From all that has touch'd you I believe you have imparted to yourselves, and now would impart the same secretly to me,  
From the living and the dead you have peopled your impassive surfaces, and the spirits thereof would be evident and amicable with me.

4

The earth expanding right hand and left hand,  
The picture alive, every part in its best light,

<sup>1</sup> In the first form of the poem there followed here three lines which were omitted in 1871 and in the following editions : —

You animals moving serenely over the earth !  
You birds that wing yourselves through the air ! you insects !  
You sprouting growths from the farmers' fields ! you stalks and weeds by the fences !

The music falling in where it is wanted,  
and stopping where it is not wanted,  
The cheerful voice of the public road, the gay fresh sentiment of the road.

O highway I travel, do you say to me *Do not leave me ?*  
Do you say *Venture not — if you leave me you are lost ?*  
Do you say *I am already prepared, I am well-beaten and undenied, adhere to me ?*

O public road, I say back I am not afraid to leave you, yet I love you,  
You express me better than I can express myself,  
You shall be more to me than my poem.

I think heroic deeds were all conceiv'd in the open air, and all free poems also,  
I think I could stop here myself and do miracles,  
I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like, and whoever beholds me shall like me,  
I think whoever I see must be happy.

5

From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,<sup>2</sup>  
Going where I list, my own master total and absolute,  
Listening to others, considering well what they say,  
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,  
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds that would hold me.

I inhale great draughts of space,  
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine.

I am larger, better than I thought,  
I did not know I held so much goodness.

All seems beautiful to me,  
I can repeat over to men and women You have done such good to me I would do the same to you,  
I will recruit for myself and you as I go,

<sup>2</sup> In the edition of 1856 this section began : —

From this hour, freedom !  
From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits, etc.

I will scatter myself among men and women as I go,  
I will toss a new gladness and roughness among them,  
Whoever denies me it shall not trouble me,  
Whoever accepts me he or she shall be blessed and shall bless me.

## 6

Now if a thousand perfect men were to appear it would not amaze me,  
Now if a thousand beautiful forms of women appear'd it would not astonish me. 70

Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons,  
It is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth.

Here a great personal deed has room,<sup>1</sup>  
(Such a deed seizes upon the hearts of the whole race of men,  
Its effusion of strength and will overwhelms law and mocks all authority and all argument against it.)

Here is the test of wisdom,  
Wisdom is not finally tested in schools,  
Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it to another not having it,  
Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible of proof, is its own proof,  
Applies to all stages and objects and qualities and is content, 80  
Is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things, and the excellence of things;  
Something there is in the float of the sight of things that provokes it out of the soul.

Now I re-examine philosophies and religions,  
They may prove well in lecture-rooms, yet not prove at all under the spacious clouds and along the landscape and flowing currents.

Here is realization,  
Here is a man tallied—he realizes here what he has in him,  
The past, the future, majesty, love—if they are vacant of you, you are vacant of them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here is space—here a great personal deed has room. (1856.)

<sup>2</sup> The animals, the past, the future, light, space,

Only the kernel of every object-nourishes;  
Where is he who tears off the husks for you and me?  
Where is he that undoes stratagems and envelopes for you and me? 90

Here is adhesiveness, it is not previously fashion'd, it is apropos;  
Do you know what it is as you pass to be loved by strangers?  
Do you know the talk of those turning eyeballs?

## 7

Here is the efflux of the soul,  
The efflux of the soul comes from within through embower'd gates, ever provoking questions,  
These yearnings why are they? these thoughts in the darkness why are they?  
Why are there men and women that while they are nigh me the sunlight expands my blood?  
Why when they leave me do my pennants of joy sink flat and lank?  
Why are there trees I never walk under but large and melodious thoughts descend upon me?  
(I think they hang there winter and summer on those trees and always drop fruit as I pass;) 100  
What is it I interchange so suddenly with strangers?  
What with some driver as I ride on the seat by his side?  
What with some fisherman drawing his seine by the shore as I walk by and pause?  
What gives me to be free to a woman's and man's good-will? what gives them to be free to mine?

## 8

The efflux of the soul is happiness, here is happiness,  
I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times,  
Now it flows unto us, we are rightly charged.

Here rises the fluid and attaching character,  
The fluid and attaching character is the freshness and sweetness of man and woman,

majesty, love, if they are vacant of you, you are vacant of them. (1856.)



(The herbs of the morning sprout no fresher and sweeter every day out of the roots of themselves, than it sprouts fresh and sweet continually out of itself.) 110

Toward the fluid and attaching character exudes the sweat of the love of young and old,  
From it falls distill'd the charm that mocks beauty and attainments,  
Toward it heaves the shuddering longing ache of contact.

9

Allons ! whoever you are come travel with me !  
Traveling with me you find what never tires.

The earth never tires,  
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first, Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first,  
Be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well envelop'd,  
I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell.

Allons ! we must not stop here, 120  
However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this dwelling we cannot remain here,  
However shelter'd this port and however calm these waters we must not anchor here,  
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us we are permitted to receive it but a little while.

10

Allons ! the inducements shall be greater,  
We will sail pathless and wild seas,  
We will go where winds blow, waves dash, and the Yankee clipper speeds by under full sail.

Allons ! with power, liberty, the earth, the elements,  
Health, defiance, gayety, self-esteem, curiosity;  
Allons ! from all formules !  
From your formules, O bat-eyed and materialistic priests. <sup>1</sup> 130

<sup>1</sup> The 1856 edition has 'formulas' in both these lines.

The stale cadaver blocks up the passage —  
the burial waits no longer.

Allons ! yet take warning !  
He traveling with me needs the best blood, thews, endurance,  
None may come to the trial till he or she bring courage and health,  
Come not here if you have already spent the best of yourself,  
Only those may come who come in sweet and determin'd bodies,  
No diseas'd person, no rum-drinker or venereal taint is permitted here.

(I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes, rhymes,  
We convince by our presence.)

11

Listen ! I will be honest with you, 14  
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes,  
These are the days that must happen to you:  
You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,  
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve,  
You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd, you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction before you are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,  
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who remain behind you,  
What beckonings of love you receive you shall only answer with passionate kisses of parting,  
You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd hands toward you.

12

Allons ! after the great Companions, and to belong to them !  
They too are on the road — they are the swift and majestic men — they are the greatest women, <sup>2</sup> 150  
Enjoyers of calms of seas and storms of seas, Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of land,

<sup>2</sup> Here began in the 1856 edition a new paragraph :

Over that which hindered them, over that which retarded, passing impediments large or small,  
Committees of crimes, committers of many beautiful virtues,  
Enjoyers of calms of seas and storms of seas, . . .

The first two lines were omitted from 1881 on.

Habitues of many distant countries, habitues of far-distant dwellings,  
 Trusters of men and women, observers of cities, solitary toilers,  
 Pausers and contemplators of tufts, blossoms, shells of the shore,  
 Dancers at wedding-dances, kissers of brides, tender helpers of children, bearers of children,  
 Soldiers of revolts, standers by gaping graves, lowerers-down of coffins,  
 Journeymen over consecutive seasons, over the years, the curious years each emerging from that which preceded it,  
 Journeymen as with companions, namely their own diverse phases,  
 Forth-steppers from the latent unrealized baby-days, 160  
 Journeymen gayly with their own youth, journeymen with their bearded and well-grain'd manhood,  
 Journeymen with their womanhood, ample, unsurpass'd, content,  
 Journeymen with their own sublime old age of manhood or womanhood,  
 Old age, calm, expanded, broad with the haughty breadth of the universe,  
 Old age, flowing free with the delicious near-by freedom of death.

13

Allons ! to that which is endless as it was beginningless,  
 To undergo much, tramps of days, rests of nights,  
 To merge all in the travel they tend to, and the days and nights they tend to,  
 Again to merge them in the start of superior journeys,  
 To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it and pass it, 170  
 To conceive no time, however distant, but what you may reach it and pass it,  
 To look up or down no road but it stretches and waits for you, however long but it stretches and waits for you,  
 To see no being, not God's or any, but you also go thither,  
 To see no possession but you may possess it, enjoying all without labor or purchase, abstracting the feast yet not abstracting one particle of it,  
 To take the best of the farmer's farm and the rich man's elegant villa, and the chaste blessings of the well-married

couple, and the fruits of orchards and flowers of gardens,  
 To take to your use out of the compact cities as you pass through,  
 To carry buildings and streets with you afterward wherever you go,  
 To gather the minds of men out of their brains as you encounter them, to gather the love out of their hearts,  
 To take your lovers on the road with you, for all that you leave them behind you,  
 To know the universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for traveling souls. 1

All parts away for the progress of souls, 181  
 All religion, all solid things, arts, governments — all that was or is apparent upon this globe, or any globe falls into niches and corners before the procession of souls along the grand roads of the universe.

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand roads of the universe, all other progress is the needed emblem and sustenance.

Forever alive, forever forward,  
 Stately, solemn, sad, withdrawn, baffled, mad, turbulent, feeble, dissatisfied,  
 Desperate, proud, fond, sick, accepted by men, rejected by men,  
 They go ! they go ! I know that they go, but I know not where they go,  
 But I know that they go toward the best — toward something great.

Whoever you are, come forth ! or man or woman come forth !  
 You must not stay sleeping and dallying there in the house, though you built it, or though it has been built for you. 190

Out of the dark confinement ! out from behind the screen !  
 It is useless to protest, I know all and expose it.

Behold through you as bad as the rest,  
 Through the laughter, dancing, dining, supping, of people,

<sup>1</sup> In the early editions, down to 1881, there follows here another brief paragraph : —

The soul travels,  
 The body does not travel as much as the soul,  
 The body has just as great a work as the soul, and parts away at last for the journeys of the soul.

Inside of dresses and ornaments, inside of  
those wash'd and trimm'd faces,  
Behold a secret silent loathing and despair.

No husband, no wife, no friend, trusted to  
hear the confession,  
Another self, a duplicate of every one,  
skulking and hiding it goes,  
Formless and wordless through the streets of  
the cities, polite and bland in the parlors,  
In the cars of railroads, in steamboats, in  
the public assembly, 200  
Home to the houses of men and women, at  
the table, in the bedroom, everywhere,  
Smartly attired, countenance smiling, form  
upright, death under the breast-bones,  
hell under the skull-bones,  
Under the broadcloth and gloves, under the  
ribbons and artificial flowers,  
Keeping fair with the customs, speaking not  
a syllable of itself,  
Speaking of any thing else but never of  
itself.

14

Allons ! through struggles and wars !  
The goal that was named cannot be coun-  
termanded.

Have the past struggles succeeded ?  
What has succeeded ? yourself ? your na-  
tion ? Nature ?  
Now understand me well — it is provided  
in the essence of things that from any  
fruition of success, no matter what, shall  
come forth something to make a greater  
struggle necessary. 210

My call is the call of battle, I nourish active  
rebellion,  
He going with me must go well arm'd,  
He going with me goes often with spare  
diet, poverty, angry enemies, desertions.

15

Allons ! the road is before us !  
It is safe — I have tried it — my own feet  
have tried it well — be not detain'd !

Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten,  
and the book on the shelf unopen'd !  
Let the tools remain in the workshop ! let  
the money remain unearn'd !  
Let the school stand ! mind not the cry of  
the teacher !

Let the preacher preach in his pulpit ! let  
the lawyer plead in the court, and the  
judge expound the law.

Camerado, I give you my hand ! 220  
I give you my love more precious than  
money,  
I give you myself before preaching or law ;  
Will you give me yourself ? will you come  
travel with me ?  
Shall we stick by each other as long as we  
live ?

1856.

MIRACLES<sup>1</sup>

WHY, who makes much of a miracle ?  
As to me I know of nothing else but  
miracles,  
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,  
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses  
toward the sky,  
Or wade, with naked feet along the beach  
just in the edge of the water,  
Or stand under trees in the woods,  
Or talk by day with any one I love, or sleep  
in the bed at night with any one I love,  
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,  
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in  
the car,  
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive  
of a summer forenoon,  
Or animals feeding in the fields,  
Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in  
the air,  
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or  
of stars shining so quiet and bright,  
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the  
new moon in spring;  
These with the rest, one and all, are to me  
miracles,  
The whole referring, yet each distinct and  
in its place.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the 1856 edition, with the title 'Poem of Perfect Miracles.' In its first form the poem began with a paragraph since omitted : —

Realism is mine, my miracles,  
Take all of the rest — take freely — I keep but my own — I  
give only of them,  
I offer them without end — I offer them to you wherever your  
feet can carry you, or your eyes reach.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the original Preface to *Leaves of Grass*, the first edition, 1855 : ' . . . every motion and every  
spear of grass, and the frames and spirits of men and  
women and all that concerns them, are unspeakably  
perfect miracles, all referring to all, and each distinct  
and in its place.'

See also the longer passage at the end of the fifth  
paragraph of this Preface, on the miracle of eyesight.

To me every hour of the light and dark is  
a miracle,  
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,  
Every square yard of the surface of the  
earth is spread with the same,  
Every foot of the interior swarms with the  
same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,  
The fishes that swim — the rocks — the  
motion of the waves — the ships with  
men in them,  
What stranger miracles are there ?

1856.

ASSURANCES<sup>1</sup>

I NEED no assurances, I am a man who is  
pre-occupied of his own soul;<sup>2</sup>  
I do not doubt that from under the feet and  
beside the hands and face I am cogni-  
zant of, are now looking faces I am not  
cognizant of, calm and actual faces,  
I do not doubt but the majesty and beauty  
of the world are latent in any iota of the  
world,<sup>3</sup>  
I do not doubt I am limitless, and that the  
universes are limitless, in vain I try to  
think how limitless,  
I do not doubt that the orbs and the sys-  
tems of orbs play their swift sports  
through the air on purpose, and that I  
shall one day be eligible to do as much  
as they, and more than they,<sup>4</sup>  
I do not doubt that temporary affairs keep  
on and on millions of years,  
I do not doubt interiors have their interiors,  
and exteriors have their exteriors, and  
that the eyesight has another eyesight,

<sup>1</sup> In the 1856 edition, with the title 'Faith Poem;' in 1860 as No. vii, *Leaves of Grass*.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1856 edition there followed the line (omitted in 1867): —

I do not doubt that whatever I know at a given time, there  
waits for me more which I do not know.

<sup>3</sup> In the 1856 edition there followed the line (omitted in 1867): —

I do not doubt there are realizations I have no idea of, wait-  
ing for me through time and through the universes — also  
upon this earth.

<sup>4</sup> Here followed, in the 1856 edition, the lines (omitted in 1867): —

I do not doubt there is far more in trivialities, insects, vulgar  
persons, slaves, dwarfs, weeds, rejected refuse, than I have  
supposed;

I do not doubt there is more in myself than I have supposed  
— and more in all men and women — and more in my poems  
than I have supposed.

and the hearing another hearing, and the  
voice another voice,

I do not doubt that the passionately-wept  
deaths of young men are provided for,  
and that the deaths of young women and  
the deaths of little children are provided  
for,

(Did you think Life was so well provided  
for, and Death, the purport of all Life, is  
not well provided for?)

I do not doubt that wrecks at sea, no  
matter what the horrors of them, no  
matter whose wife, child, husband, father,  
lover, has gone down, are provided for,  
to the minutest points,<sup>5</sup>

I do not doubt that whatever can possibly  
happen anywhere at any time, is pro-  
vided for in the inherences of things,

I do not think Life provides for all and for  
Time and Space, but I believe Heavenly  
Death provides for all.<sup>6</sup>

1856.

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY<sup>7</sup>

I

FLOOD-TIDE below me! I see you face to  
face!

Clouds of the west — sun there half an  
hour high — I see you also face to face.

<sup>5</sup> Here followed, in 1856, the lines (omitted in 1871):

I do not doubt that shallowness, meanness, malignance, are  
provided for;

I do not doubt that cities, you, America, the remainder of the  
earth, politics, freedom, degradations, are carefully pro-  
vided for.

<sup>6</sup> The last line of the poem, and the fourth line from  
the end, in parenthesis, appeared first in the edition of  
1871, where the poem was included among the *Whispers  
of Heavenly Death*.

<sup>7</sup> Living in Brooklyn or New York city from this  
time forward, my life, then, and still more the follow-  
ing years, was curiously identified with Fulton ferry,  
already becoming the greatest of its sort in the world  
for general importance, volume, variety, rapidity, and  
picturesqueness. Almost daily, later ('50 to '60), I  
cross'd on the boats, often up in the pilot-houses where  
I could get a full sweep, absorbing shows, accompani-  
ments, surroundings. What oceanic currents, eddies,  
underneath — the great tides of humanity also, with  
ever-shifting movements! Indeed, I have always had a  
passion for ferries; to me they afford inimitable, stream-  
ing, never-failing, living poems. The river and bay  
scenery, all about New York island, any time of a fine  
day — the hurrying, splashing sea-tides — the changing  
panorama of steamers, all sizes, often a string of big  
ones outward bound to distant ports — the myriads of  
white sail'd schooners, sloops, skiffs, and the marvel-  
lously beautiful yachts — the majestic Sound boats as  
they rounded the Battery and came along towards 5,  
afternoon, eastward bound — the prospect off towards  
Staten Island, or down the Narrows, or the other way  
up the Hudson — what refreshment of spirit such sights

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me !

On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose, And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

## 2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day,  
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated, every one disintegrated yet part of the scheme,  
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,  
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on the walk in the street and the passage over the river,  
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away,  
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them,  
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore,  
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide, Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south and east,  
Others will see the islands large and small; Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half an hour high,  
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others will see them,  
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

## 3

It avails not, time nor place — distance avails not,

and experiences gave me years ago (and many a time since) ! My old pilot friends, the Balsara, Johnny Cole, Ira Smith, William White, and my young ferry friend, Tom Gere — how well I remember them all ! (WHITMAN, *Specimen Days*. Complete Prose Works, Small, Maynard & Co., p. 11.)

In 1856 the poem was entitled 'Sun-down Poem,' and the first line read: —

Flood-tide of the river, flow on ! I watch you, face to face !

I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence,

Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,

Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,

Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I was refresh'd,

Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood yet was hurried,

Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,

Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,

Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left the rest in strong shadow,

Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south,

Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,

Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,

Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of my head in the sunlit water,

Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,

Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,

Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,

Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,

Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor,

The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,

The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender serpentine pennants,

The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilot-houses,

The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels,

The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,

The scallop-edged waves in the twilight,  
 the ladled cups, the frolicsome crests and  
 glistening,  
 The stretch afar growing dimmer and dim-  
 mer, the gray walls of the granite store-  
 houses by the docks,  
 On the river the shadowy group, the big  
 steam-tug closely flank'd on each side by  
 the barges, the hay-boat, the belated  
 lighter,  
 On the neighboring shore the fires from the  
 foundry chimneys burning high and glar-  
 ingly into the night,  
 Casting their flicker of black contrasted  
 with wild red and yellow light over the  
 tops of houses, and down into the clefts  
 of streets.

4

These and all else were to me the same as  
 they are to you,  
 I loved well those cities, loved well the  
 stately and rapid river, 50  
 The men and women I saw were all near to  
 me,  
 Others the same — others who look back  
 on me because I look'd forward to them  
 (The time will come, though I stop here to-  
 day and to-night).

5

What is it then between us?  
 What is the count of the scores or hundreds  
 of years between us?

Whatever it is, it avails not — distance  
 avails not, and place avails not,  
 I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was  
 mine,  
 I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island,  
 and bathed in the waters around it,  
 I too felt the curious abrupt questionings  
 stir within me,  
 In the day among crowds of people some-  
 times they came upon me, 60  
 In my walks home late at night or as I lay  
 in my bed they came upon me,  
 I too had been struck from the float forever  
 held in solution,  
 I too had receiv'd identity by my body,  
 That I was I knew was of my body, and  
 what I should be I knew I should be of  
 my body.

6

It is not upon you alone the dark patches  
 fall,

The dark threw its patches down upon me  
 also,  
 The best I had done seem'd to me blank  
 and suspicious,  
 My great thoughts as I supposed them, were  
 they not in reality meagre?  
 Nor is it you alone who know what it is to  
 be evil,  
 I am he who knew what it was to be evil, 70  
 I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,  
 Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole,  
 grudg'd,  
 Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared  
 not speak,  
 Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly,  
 cowardly, malignant,  
 The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting  
 in me,  
 The cheating look, the frivolous word, the  
 adulterous wish, not wanting,  
 Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness,  
 laziness, none of these wanting,  
 Was one with the rest, the days and haps  
 of the rest,<sup>1</sup>  
 Was call'd by my highest name by clear  
 loud voices of young men as they saw me  
 approaching or passing,  
 Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or  
 the negligent leaning of their flesh against  
 me as I sat, 80  
 Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat  
 or public assembly, yet never told them  
 a word,  
 Lived the same life with the rest, the same  
 old laughing, gnawing, sleeping,  
 Play'd the part that still looks back on the  
 actor or actress,  
 The same old rôle, the rôle that is what we  
 make it, as great as we like,  
 Or as small as we like, or both great and  
 small.

7

Closer yet I approach you,  
 What thought you have of me now, I had  
 as much of you — I laid in my stores in  
 advance,  
 I consider'd long and seriously of you be-  
 fore you were born.

Who was to know what should come home  
 to me?

Who knows but I am enjoying this? 90

<sup>1</sup> Instead of this line the 1856 edition has: —

But I was a Manhattaneer, free, friendly, and proud!  
 and this line begins a new paragraph.



Who knows, for all the distance, but I am  
as good as looking at you now, for all  
you cannot see me?<sup>1</sup>

8

Ah, what can ever be more stately and ad-  
mirable to me than mast-hemm'd Man-  
hattan?

River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves  
of flood-tide?

The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the  
hay-boat in the twilight, and the belated  
lighter?

What gods can exceed these that clasp me  
by the hand, and with voices I love call  
me promptly and loudly by my highest  
name as I approach?

What is more subtle than this which ties  
me to the woman or man that looks in  
my face?

Which fuses me into you now, and pours  
my meaning into you?<sup>2</sup>

We understand, then, do we not?

What I promis'd without mentioning it,  
have you not accepted?

What the study could not teach — what the  
preaching could not accomplish is accom-  
plish'd, is it not?<sup>3</sup>

100

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide,  
and ebb with the ebb-tide!

Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!  
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench  
with your splendor me, or the men and  
women generations after me!

Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds  
of passengers!

<sup>1</sup> There follow at this point in the 1856 edition two  
other brief paragraphs: —

It is not you alone, nor I alone,  
Not a few races, not a few generations, not a few centuries,  
It is that each came, or comes, or shall come, from its due  
emission, without fail, either now, or then, or henceforth.

Everything indicates — the smallest does, and the largest  
does,

A necessary film envelopes all, and envelopes the soul for a  
proper time.

These lines seem necessary to the understanding of line  
121, which has been retained in all editions.

<sup>2</sup> Remember, the book arose out of my life in Brook-  
lyn and New York from 1838 to 1855, absorbing a million  
people with an intimacy, an eagerness, an abandon, prob-  
ably never equalled. (WHITMAN, Bucke's *Life*, p. 67.)

<sup>3</sup> In the 1856 edition this paragraph ends with a line  
unhappily omitted from the latest editions: —

What the push of reading could not start is started by me  
personally, is it not?

Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand  
up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!

Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw  
out questions and answers!

Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float  
of solution!

Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house  
or street or public assembly!

Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and  
musically call me by my highest name!

Live, old life! play the part that looks  
back on the actor or actress!

110

Play the old rôle, the rôle that is great or  
small according as one makes it!

Consider, you who peruse me, whether I  
may not in unknown ways be looking  
upon you;

Be firm, rail over the river, to support those  
who lean idly, yet haste with the hasting  
current;

Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel  
in large circles high in the air;

Receive the summer sky, you water, and  
faithfully hold it till all downcast eyes  
have time to take it from you!

Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the  
shape of my head, or any one's head, in  
the sunlit water!

Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass  
up or down, white-sail'd schooners, sloops,  
lighters!

Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly  
lower'd at sunset!

Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys!  
cast black shadows at nightfall! cast red  
and yellow light over the tops of the  
houses!

Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate  
what you are,

120

You necessary film, continue to envelop the  
soul,

About my body for me, and your body for  
you, be hung our divinest aromas,

Thrive, cities — bring your freight, bring  
your shows, ample and sufficient rivers,

Expand, being than which none else is per-  
haps more spiritual,

Keep your places, objects than which none  
else is more lasting.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> At this point a paragraph has been omitted from  
the 1881 and later editions: —

We descend upon you and all things, we arrest you all,  
We realize the soul only by you, you faithful solids and  
fluids,

Through you color, form, location, sublimity, ideality,  
Through you every proof, comparison, and all the sugges-  
tions and determinations of ourselves.



You have waited, you always wait, you  
 dumb, beautiful ministers,  
 We receive you with free sense at last, and  
 are insatiate henceforward,  
 Not you any more shall be able to foil us,  
 or withhold yourselves from us,  
 We use you, and do not cast you aside — we  
 plant you permanently within us,  
 We fathom you not — we love you — there  
 is perfection in you also, <sup>130</sup>  
 You furnish your parts toward eternity,  
 Great or small, you furnish your parts to-  
 ward the soul.

1856.

### OUT OF THE CRADLE END- LESSLY ROCKING <sup>1</sup> \*

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,  
 Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musi-  
 cal shuttle,  
 Out of the Ninth-month midnight,  
 Over the sterile sands and the fields be-  
 yond, where the child leaving his bed  
 wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot,  
 Down from the shower'd halo,  
 Up from the mystic play of shadows twin-  
 ing and twisting as if they were alive,  
 Out from the patches of briers and black-  
 berries,  
 From the memories of the bird that chanted  
 to me,  
 From your memories sad brother, from the  
 fitful risings and fallings I heard,  
 From under that yellow half-moon late-  
 risen and swollen as if with tears, <sup>10</sup>  
 From those beginning notes of yearning  
 and love there in the mist,  
 From the thousand responses of my heart  
 never to cease,  
 From the myriad thence-arous'd words,  
 From the word stronger and more delicious  
 than any,  
 From such as now they start the scene re-  
 visiting,  
 As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead  
 passing,

<sup>1</sup> First published in the New York *Saturday Press*, December 24, 1859, with the title 'A Child's Reminiscence.' In 1860 it appears with the new title, 'A Word Out of the Sea,' for the whole poem, and with the sub-  
 title, 'Reminiscences,' for the part beginning with the  
 second paragraph.

In the earlier versions, up to 1871, the first line  
 read: —

Out of the rocked cradle.

Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,  
 A man, yet by these tears a little boy  
 again,  
 Throwing myself on the sand, confronting  
 the waves,  
 I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here  
 and hereafter, <sup>20</sup>  
 Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly  
 leaping beyond them,  
 A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,  
 When the lilac-scent was in the air <sup>2</sup> and  
 Fifth-month grass was growing,  
 Up this seashore in some briers,  
 Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two  
 together,  
 And their nest, and four light-green eggs  
 spotted with brown,  
 And every day the he-bird to and fro near  
 at hand,  
 And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her  
 nest, silent, with bright eyes,  
 And every day I, a curious boy, never too  
 close, never disturbing them, <sup>30</sup>  
 Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

*Shine! shine! shine!*  
*Pour down your warmth, great sun!*  
*While we bask, we two together.*

*Two together!*  
*Winds blow south, or winds blow north,*  
*Day come white, or night come black,*  
*Home, or rivers and mountains from home,*  
*Singing all time, minding no time,*  
*While we two keep together.* <sup>40</sup>

Till of a sudden,  
 May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,  
 One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on  
 the nest,  
 Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,  
 Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the  
 sound of the sea,  
 And at night under the full of the moon  
 in calmer weather,  
 Over the hoarse surging of the sea,  
 Or flitting from brier to brier by day,  
 I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining  
 one, the he-bird, <sup>50</sup>  
 The solitary guest from Alabama.

<sup>2</sup> When the snows had melted. (1859-60.)

*Blow! blow! blow!*  
*Blow up sea-winds along Pausanok's shore;*  
*I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to*  
*me.*

*Yes, when the stars glisten'd,*  
*All night long on the prong of a moss-scal-*  
*lop'd stake,*  
*Down almost amid the slapping waves,*  
*Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.*

*He call'd on his mate,*  
*He pour'd forth the meanings which I of*  
*all men know.* 60

*Yes my brother I know,*  
*The rest might not, but I have treasur'd*  
*every note,*  
*For more than once dimly down to the*  
*beach gliding,*  
*Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending*  
*myself with the shadows,*  
*Recalling now the obscure shapes, the*  
*echoes, the sounds and sights after their*  
*sorts,*  
*The white arms out in the breakers tire-*  
*lessly tossing,*  
*I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting*  
*my hair,*  
*Listen'd long and long.*

*Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating*  
*the notes,*  
*Following you my brother.* 70

*Soothe! soothe! soothe!*  
*Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,*  
*And again another behind embracing and lap-*  
*ping, every one close,*  
*But my love soothes not me, not me.*

*Low hangs the moon, it rose late,*  
*It is lagging — O I think it is heavy with love,*  
*with love.*

*O madly the sea pushes upon the land,*  
*With love, with love.*

*O night! do I not see my love fluttering out*  
*among the breakers?*  
*What is that little black thing I see there in*  
*the white?* 80

*Loud! loud! loud!*  
*Loud I call to you, my love!*

*High and clear I shoot my voice over the*  
*waves,*  
*Surely you must know who is here, is here,*  
*You must know who I am, my love.*

*Low-hanging moon!*  
*What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?*  
*O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!*  
*O moon do not keep her from me any longer.*

*Land! land! O land!* 90  
*Whichever way I turn, O I think you could*  
*give me my mate back again if you only*  
*would,*  
*For I am almost sure I see her dimly which-*  
*ever way I look.*

*O rising stars!*  
*Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will*  
*rise with some of you.*

*O throat! O trembling throat!*  
*Sound clearer through the atmosphere!*  
*Pierce the woods, the earth,*  
*Somewhere listening to catch you must be the*  
*one I want.*

*Shake out carols!*  
*Solitary here, the night's carols!* 100  
*Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!*  
*Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning*  
*moon!*  
*O under that moon where she droops almost*  
*down into the sea!*  
*O reckless despairing carols.*

*But soft! sink low!*  
*Soft! let me just murmur,*  
*And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd*  
*sea,*  
*For somewhere I believe I heard my mate re-*  
*sponding to me,*  
*So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,*  
*But not altogether still, for then she might not*  
*come immediately to me.* 110

*Hither my love!*  
*Here I am! here!*  
*With this just-sustain'd note I announce my-*  
*self to you,*  
*This gentle call is for you my love, for you.*

*Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,*  
*That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my*  
*voice,*

*That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the  
spray,  
Those are the shadows of leaves.*

*O darkness! O in vain!  
O I am very sick and sorrowful.* 120

*O brown halo in the sky near the moon,  
drooping upon the sea!  
O troubled reflection in the sea!  
O throat! O throbbing heart!  
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the  
night.*

*O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!  
In the air, in the woods, over fields,  
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!  
But my mate no more, no more with me!  
We two together no more.*

*The aria sinking,* 130  
*All else continuing, the stars shining,  
The winds blowing, the notes of the bird  
continuous echoing,  
With angry moans the fierce old mother in-  
cessantly moaning,  
On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray  
and rustling,  
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging  
down, drooping, the face of the sea al-  
most touching,  
The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the  
waves, with his hair the atmosphere dal-  
lying,  
The love in the heart long pent, now loose,  
now at last tumultuously bursting,  
The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul,  
swiftly depositing,  
The strange tears down the cheeks  
coursing,  
The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,  
The undertone, the savage old mother in-  
cessantly crying,* 141  
*To the boy's soul's questions sullenly  
timing, some drown'd secret hissing,  
To the outseting bard.*

*Demon or bird (said the boy's soul)!  
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing?  
or is it really to me?  
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use  
sleeping, now I have heard you,  
Now in a moment I know what I am for, I  
awake,  
And already a thousand singers, a thousand*

*songs, clearer, louder and more sorrowful  
than yours,  
A thousand warbling echoes have started  
to life within me, never to die.*

*O you singer solitary, singing by yourself,  
projecting me,* 150  
*O solitary me listening, never more shall I  
cease perpetuating you,  
Never more shall I escape, never more the  
reverberations,  
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be  
absent from me,  
Never again leave me to be the peaceful  
child I was before what there in the night,  
By the sea under the yellow and sagging  
moon,  
The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the  
sweet hell within,  
The unknown want, the destiny of me.*

*O give me the clew (it lurks in the night  
here somewhere)!  
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!*

*A word then (for I will conquer it),* 160  
*The word final, superior to all,  
Subtle, sent up — what is it? — I listen;  
Are you whispering it, and have been all  
the time, you sea-waves?  
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet  
sands?*

*Whereto answering, the sea,  
Delaying not, hurrying not,  
Whisper'd me through the night, and very  
plainly before daybreak,  
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word  
death,  
And again death, death, death, death,  
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor  
like my arous'd child's heart,* 170  
*But edging near as privately for me rus-  
tling at my feet,  
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and  
laving me softly all over,  
Death, death, death, death, death.*

*Which I do not forget,  
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and  
brother,  
That he sang to me in the moonlight on  
Paumanok's gray beach,  
With the thousand responsive songs at ran-  
dom,*

My own songs awaked from that hour,  
 And with them the key, the word up from  
 the waves,  
 The word of the sweetest song and all  
 songs,  
 That strong and delicious word which,  
 creeping to my feet,  
 (Or like some old crone rocking the cradle,  
 swathed in sweet garments, bending  
 aside,)  
 The sea whisper'd me.

1859. (1860.)<sup>1</sup>

### FACING WEST FROM CALIFORNIA'S SHORES<sup>2</sup>

FACING west from California's shores,  
 Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet un-  
 found,  
 I, a child, very old, over waves, towards  
 the house of maternity, the land of mi-  
 grations, look afar,  
 Look off the shores of my Western sea, the  
 circle almost circled;  
 For starting westward from Hindustan,  
 from the vales of Kashmere,  
 From Asia, from the north, from the God,  
 the sage, and the hero,  
 From the south, from the flowery penin-  
 sulas and the spice islands,  
 Long having wander'd since, round the  
 earth having wander'd,  
 Now I face home again, very pleas'd and  
 joyous.  
 (But where is what I started for so long  
 ago?  
 And why is it yet unfound?)

1860.

### I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I HEAR America singing, the varied carols  
 I hear,  
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as  
 it should be blithe and strong,  
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his  
 plank or beam,

<sup>1</sup> For Whitman the date of publication in book form is the most important. This has therefore been added, in parentheses, when the poem was published earlier in a periodical.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1860 edition, without separate sub-title, as No. 10 of the section entitled *Enfance d'Adam*. In this edition the poem began with what is now the second line. The first line was added in 1867.

The mason singing his as he makes ready  
 for work, or leaves off work,  
 The boatman singing what belongs to him  
 in his boat, the deckhand singing on the  
 steamboat deck,  
 The shoemaker singing as he sits on his  
 bench, the hatter singing as he stands,  
 The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on  
 his way in the morning, or at noon inter-  
 mission or at sundown,  
 The delicious singing of the mother, or of  
 the young wife at work, or of the girl  
 sewing or washing,  
 Each singing what belongs to him or her  
 and to none else,  
 The day what belongs to the day — at  
 night the party of young fellows, robust,  
 friendly,  
 Singing with open mouths their strong me-  
 lodious songs.

1860.

### POETS TO COME

POETS to come! orators, singers, musicians  
 to come!  
 Not to-day is to justify me and answer what  
 I am for,  
 But you, a new brood, native, athletic, con-  
 tinental, greater than before known,  
 Arouse! for you must justify me.

I myself but write one or two indicative  
 words for the future,  
 I but advance a moment only to wheel and  
 hurry back in the darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along without  
 fully stopping, turns a casual look upon  
 you and then averts his face,  
 Leaving it to you to prove and define it,  
 Expecting the main things from you.

21

### ME IMPERTURBE

ME imperturbe, standing at ease in Nature,  
 Master of all or mistress of all, afloat in  
 the midst of irrational things,  
 Imbued as they, passive, receptive silent  
 as they,  
 Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety,  
 foibles, crimes, less important than I  
 thought,

Me toward the Mexican sea, or in the Man-  
nahatta or the Tennessee, or far north or  
inland,

A river man, or a man of the woods or of  
any farm-life of these States or of the  
coast, or the lakes of Kanada,

Me wherever my life is lived, O to be self-  
balanced for contingencies,

To confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule,  
accidents, rebuffs, as the trees and ani-  
mals do.

1860.

### FOR YOU O DEMOCRACY<sup>1</sup>

COME, I will make the continent indissol-  
uble,

I will make the most splendid race the sun  
ever shone upon,

<sup>1</sup> This and the eight following poems belong to the  
section of Whitman's work devoted to the celebration  
of 'the dear love of comrades,' and entitled 'Calamus.'  
'The Sweet Flag or Calamus,' says W. S. Kennedy, in  
explaining Whitman's use of this title, 'belongs among  
the grasses, and like them suggests equality and brother-  
hood. It is found in vast masses in marshy ground,  
growing in fascicles of three, four, or five blades,  
which cling together for support, shoulder to shoulder  
and back to back, the delicate "pink-tinged" roots  
exhaling a faint fragrance, not only when freshly  
gathered, but after having been kept many years.'

With these poems should be read the volume entitled  
*Calamus, a Series of Letters written during the Years  
1868-1880 by Walt Whitman to a Young Friend.*

'For you O Democracy' is a revised and improved  
version of the last lines of a much longer poem with the  
title 'States,' in the 1860 edition, the whole of which is  
worth preserving: —

STATES!  
Were you looking to be held together by the lawyers?  
By an agreement on a paper? Or by arms?

Away!  
I arrive, bringing these, beyond all the forces of courts and  
arms,  
These! to hold you together as firmly as the earth itself is  
held together.

The old breath of life, ever new,  
Here! I pass it by contact to you, America.

O mother! have you done much for me?  
Behold, there shall from me be much done for you.

There shall from me be a new friendship — It shall be called  
after my name,  
It shall circulate through The States, indifferent of place.  
It shall twist and intertwist them through and around each  
other — Compact shall they be, showing new signs,  
Affection shall solve every one of the problems of freedom,  
Those who love each other shall be invincible,  
They shall finally make America completely victorious, in  
my name.

One from Massachusetts shall be comrade to a Missourian,  
One from Maine or Vermont, and a Carolinian and an Ore-  
gonese, shall be friends triune, more precious to each other  
than all the riches of the earth.  
To Michigan shall be wafted perfume from Florida,  
To the Mannahatta from Cuba or Mexico,  
Not the perfume of flowers, but sweeter, and wafted beyond  
death.

No danger shall balk Columbia's lovers,  
If need be, a thousand shall sternly immolate themselves  
for one,

I will make divine magnetic lands,  
With the love of comrades,  
With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees  
along all the rivers of America, and  
along the shores of the great lakes, and  
all over the prairies,

I will make inseparable cities with their  
arms about each other's necks,

By the love of comrades,  
By the manly love of comrades.

For you these from me, O Democracy, to  
serve you ma femme!

For you, for you I am trilling these songs.  
1860.

### RECORDERS AGES HENCE

RECORDERS ages hence,<sup>2</sup>

Come, I will take you down underneath  
this impassive exterior, I will tell you  
what to say of me,

Publish my name and hang up my picture  
as that of the tenderest lover,

The friend the lover's portrait, of whom  
his friend his lover was fondest,

The Kanuck shall be willing to lay down his life for the  
Kansian, and the Kansian for the Kanuck, on due need.

It shall be customary in all directions, in the houses and  
streets, to see manly affection,  
The departing brother or friend shall salute the remaining  
brother or friend with a kiss.

There shall be innovations,  
There shall be countless linked hands — namely, the North-  
easterner's, and the Northwesterner's, and the South-  
westerner's, and those of the interior, and all their brood,  
These shall be masters of the world under a new power,  
They shall laugh to scorn the attacks of all the remainder of  
the world.

The most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face lightly,  
The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers,  
The continuance of Equality shall be comrades.

These shall tie and band stronger than hoops of iron,  
I, ecstatic, O partners! O lands! henceforth with the love of  
lovers tie you.

I will make the continent indissoluble,  
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever yet shone  
upon,  
I will make divine magnetic lands.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers  
of America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all  
over the prairies,  
I will make inseparable cities, with their arms about each  
other's necks.

For you these, from me, O Democracy, to serve you, ma  
femme!  
For you! for you, I am trilling these songs.

<sup>2</sup> Instead of this line, the edition of 1860 reads: —

You bards of ages hence! when you refer to me, mind not so  
much my poems,  
Nor speak of me that I prophesied of The States, and led  
them the way of their glories.

Who was not proud of his songs, but of the  
measureless ocean of love within him,  
and freely pour'd it forth,  
Who often walk'd lonesome walks thinking  
of his dear friends, his lovers,  
Who pensive away from one he lov'd often  
lay sleepless and dissatisfied at night,  
Who knew too well the sick, sick dread lest  
the one he lov'd might secretly be indif-  
ferent to him,  
Whose happiest days were far away through  
fields, in woods, on hills, he and another  
wandering hand in hand, they twain apart  
from other men,  
Who oft as he saunter'd the streets curv'd  
with his arm the shoulder of his friend,  
while the arm of his friend rested upon  
him also.

1860.

### WHEN I HEARD AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY

WHEN I heard at the close of the day how  
my name had been receiv'd with plaudits  
in the capitol, still it was not a happy  
night for me that follow'd,  
And else when I carous'd, or when my  
plans were accomplish'd, still I was not  
happy,  
But the day when I rose at dawn from the  
bed of perfect health, refresh'd, singing,  
inhaling the ripe breath of autumn,  
When I saw the full moon in the west  
grow pale and disappear in the morning  
light,  
When I wander'd alone over the beach,  
and undressing bathed, laughing with the  
cool waters, and saw the sun rise,  
And when I thought how my dear friend  
my lover was on his way coming, O then  
I was happy,  
O then each breath tasted sweeter, and all  
that day my food nourish'd me more, and  
the beautiful day pass'd well,  
And the next came with equal joy, and with  
the next at evening came my friend,  
And that night while all was still I heard  
the waters roll slowly continually up the  
shores,  
I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and  
sands as directed to me whispering to  
congratulate me,  
For the one I love most lay sleeping by me  
under the same cover in the cool night,

In the stillness in the autumn moonbeams  
his face was inclined toward me,  
And his arm lay lightly around my breast  
— and that night I was happy.

1860.

### I SAW IN LOUISIANA A LIVE- OAK GROWING

I SAW in Louisiana a live-oak growing,  
All alone stood it and the moss hung down  
from the branches,  
Without any companion it grew there utter-  
ing joyous leaves of dark green,  
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made  
me think of myself,  
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous  
leaves standing alone there without its  
friend near, for I knew I could not,  
And I broke off a twig with a certain num-  
ber of leaves upon it, and twined around  
it a little moss,  
And brought it away, and I have placed  
it in sight in my room,  
It is not needed to remind me as of my  
own dear friends,  
(For I believe lately I think of little else  
than of them,)  
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it  
makes me think of manly love;  
For all that, and though the live-oak glis-  
tens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide  
flat space,  
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a  
friend a lover near,  
I know very well I could not.

1860.

### I HEAR IT WAS CHARGED AGAINST ME

I HEAR it was charged against me that I  
sought to destroy institutions,  
But really I am neither for nor against in-  
stitutions,  
(What indeed have I in common with them?  
or what with the destruction of them?)  
Only I will establish in the Mannahatta  
and in every city of these States inland  
and seaboard,  
And in the fields and woods, and above  
every keel little or large that dents the  
water,



Without edifices or rules or trustees or any  
argument,  
The institution of the dear love of com-  
rades.

1860.

## THE PRAIRIE-GRASS DIVIDING

THE prairie-grass dividing, its special odor  
breathing,  
I demand of it the spiritual corresponding,  
Demand the most copious and close com-  
panionship of men,  
Demand the blades to rise of words, acts,  
beings,  
Those of the open atmosphere, coarse, sun-  
lit, fresh, nutritious,  
Those that go their own gait, erect, step-  
ping with freedom and command, leading  
not following,  
Those with a never-quell'd audacity, those  
with sweet and lusty flesh clear of taint,  
Those that look carelessly in the faces of  
Presidents and governors, as to say *Who  
are you?*  
Those of earth-born passion, simple, never  
constrain'd, never obedient,  
Those of inland America.<sup>1</sup>

1860.

<sup>1</sup> If you care to have a word from me, I should speak it about these very prairies; they impress me most, of all the objective shows I have seen on this, my first real visit to the West. . . . As I have . . . launch'd my view across broad expanses of living green, in every direction—I have again been most impress'd, I say, and shall remain for the rest of my life most impress'd, with . . . that vast Something, stretching out on its own unbounded scale, unconfined, which there is in these prairies, combining the real and the ideal, and beautiful as dreams.

I wonder indeed if the people of this continental inland West know how much of first-class *art* they have in these prairies—how original and all your own—how much of the influences of a character for your future humanity, broad, patriotic, heroic, and new? how entirely they tally on land the grandeur and superb monotony of the skies of heaven, and the ocean with its waters? how freeing, soothing, nourishing they are to the soul?

Then is it not subtly they who have given us our leading modern Americans, Lincoln and Grant?—vast-spread, average men—their foregrounds of character altogether practical and real, yet (to those who have eyes to see) with finest backgrounds of the ideal, towering high as any. And do we not see, in them, foreshadowings of the future races that shall fill these prairies?

Not but what the Yankee and Atlantic States, and every other part—Texas, and the States flanking the south-east and the Gulf of Mexico—the Pacific shore empire—the Territories and Lakes, and the Canada line (the day is not yet, but it will come, including Canada entire)—are equally and integrally and indis-

## WHEN I PERUSE THE CON- QUER'D FAME

WHEN I peruse the conquer'd fame of he-  
roes and the victories of mighty generals,  
I do not envy the generals,  
Nor the President in his Presidency, nor  
the rich in his great house,  
But when I hear of the brotherhood of lov-  
ers, how it was with them,  
How together through life, through dan-  
gers, odium, unchanging, long and long,  
Through youth and through middle and old  
age, how unfaltering, how affectionate  
and faithful they were,  
Then I am pensive—I hastily walk away  
fill'd with the bitterest envy.

1860.

## I DREAM'D IN A DREAM<sup>2</sup>

I DREAM'D in a dream I saw a city invin-  
cible to the attacks of the whole of the  
rest of the earth,  
I dream'd that was the new city of Friends,

solubly this Nation, the *sine qua non* of the human, po-  
litical and commercial New World. But this favor'd  
central area of (in round numbers) two thousand miles  
square seems fated to be the home both of what I would  
call America's distinctive ideas and distinctive realities.  
(WHITMAN, *Specimen Days*, 'The Prairies.' Complete  
Prose Works, Small, Maynard & Co., pp. 134, 135.)

<sup>2</sup> Intense and loving comradeship, the personal and  
passionate attachment of man to man—which, hard to  
define, underlies the lessons and ideals of the profound  
saviours of every land and age, and which seems to  
promise, when thoroughly develop'd, cultivated and  
recognized in manners and literature, the most sub-  
stantial hope and safety of the future of these States,  
will then [when the true poet comes] be fully express'd.

A strong fibred joyousness and faith, and the sense  
of health *al fresco*, may well enter into the preparation  
of future noble American authorship. . . .

It is to the development, identification, and general  
prevalence of that fervid comradeship (the adhesive  
love, at least rivaling the amative love hitherto possess-  
ing imaginative literature, if not going beyond it), that  
I look for the counterbalance and offset of our mate-  
rialistic and vulgar American democracy, and for the  
spiritualization thereof. Many will say it is a dream,  
and will not follow my inferences: but I confidently  
expect a time when there will be seen, running like a  
half-hid warp through all the myriad audible and visi-  
ble worldly interests of America, threads of manly  
friendship, fond and loving, pure and sweet, strong and  
life-long, carried to degrees hitherto unknown—not  
only giving tone to individual character, and making  
it unprecedentedly emotional, muscular, heroic, and re-  
fined, but having the deepest relations to general pol-  
itics. I say democracy infers such loving comradeship,  
as its most inevitable twin or counterpart, without  
which it will be incomplete, in vain, and incapable of  
perpetuating itself. . . .

In my opinion, it is by a fervent, accepted develop-



Nothing was greater there than the quality  
of robust love, it led the rest,  
It was seen every hour in the actions of the  
men of that city,  
And in all their looks and words.

1860.

### FULL OF LIFE NOW

FULL of life now, compact, visible,  
I, forty years old the eighty-third year of  
the States,  
To one a century hence or any number of  
centuries hence,  
To you yet unborn these, seeking you.

When you read these I that was visible am  
become invisible,  
Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing  
my poems, seeking me,  
Fancying how happy you were if I could be  
with you and become your comrade;  
Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too  
certain but I am now with you.)

1860.

### TO ONE SHORTLY TO DIE

FROM all the rest I single out you, having  
a message for you,  
You are to die — let others tell you what  
they please, I cannot prevaricate,  
I am exact and merciless, but I love you —  
there is no escape for you.

Softly I lay my right hand upon you, you  
just feel it,  
I do not argue, I bend my head close and  
half envelop it,  
I sit quietly by, I remain faithful,  
I am more than nurse, more than parent or  
neighbor,  
I absolve you from all except yourself  
spiritual bodily, that is eternal, you your-  
self will surely escape,  
The corpse you will leave will be but  
excrementitious.

ment of comradeship, the beautiful and sane affection of  
man for man, latent in all the young fellows, north and  
south, east and west — it is by this, I say, and by what  
goes directly and indirectly along with it, that the  
United States of the future (I cannot too often repeat),  
are to be most effectually welded together, intercalated,  
anneal'd into a living union. (WHITMAN, in his Preface  
to the 1876 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Complete  
Prose Works, Small, Maynard & Co., pp. 239, 240, and  
277, 278.)

The sun bursts through in unlooked-for  
directions,  
Strong thoughts fill you and confidence,  
you smile,  
You forget you are sick, as I forget you  
are sick,  
You do not see the medicines, you do not  
mind the weeping friends, I am with  
you,  
I exclude others from you, there is nothing  
to be commiserated,  
I do not commiserate, I congratulate you.

1860.

### NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIES<sup>1</sup>

NIGHT on the prairies,  
The supper is over, the fire on the ground  
burns low,  
The wearied emigrants sleep, wrapt in their  
blankets;  
I walk by myself — I stand and look at the  
stars, which I think now I never realized  
before.

Now I absorb immortality and peace,  
I admire death and test propositions.

How plenteous! how spiritual! how re-  
sumé!  
The same old man and soul — the same old  
aspirations, and the same content.

I was thinking the day most splendid till I  
saw what the not-day exhibited,  
I was thinking this globe enough till there  
sprang out so noiseless around me myri-  
ads of other globes.

Now while the great thoughts of space and  
eternity fill me I will measure myself by  
them,

<sup>1</sup> The germ of this poem is found in a loose note of  
Whitman's: 'Idea of poem. Day and night. Namely,  
celebrate the beauty of Day, with all its splendor, the  
sun — life — action — Love — strength. The Night with  
its beauty. . .'

Compare also the passages from Whitman's Prose  
Works quoted or referred to in the note on 'When I  
heard the learn'd astronomer'; especially the passage  
in *Specimen Days* under date of July 22, 1878. Com-  
plete Prose Works, pp. 111, 112.

Whitman was acquainted with Blanco White's fa-  
mous sonnet on this same idea. Among his clippings  
he preserved a copy of it, on the margin of which he  
had written: 'What life hides too!' (*Notes and Frag-  
ments*, p. 104.)

And now touch'd with the lives of other  
globes arrived as far along as those of  
the earth,

Or waiting to arrive, or pass'd on farther  
than those of the earth,

I henceforth no more ignore them than I  
ignore my own life,

Or the lives of the earth arrived as far as  
mine, or waiting to arrive.

O I see now that life cannot exhibit all to  
me, as the day cannot,

I see that I am to wait for what will be  
exhibited by death.

1860.

O MAGNET-SOUTH<sup>1</sup>

O MAGNET-SOUTH! O glistening perfumed  
South! my South!

O quick mettle, rich blood, impulse and  
love! good and evil! O all dear to  
me!

O dear to me my birth-things — all moving  
things and the trees where I was born  
— the grains, plants, rivers,

Dear to me my own slow sluggish rivers  
where they flow, distant, over flats of  
silvery sands or through swamps,

Dear to me the Roanoke, the Savannah, the  
Altamahaw, the Pedee, the Tombigbee,  
the Santee, the Coosa and the Sabine,

O pensive, far away wandering, I return with  
my soul to haunt their banks again,

Again in Florida I float on transparent  
lakes, I float on the Okeechobee, I cross  
the hummock-land or through pleasant  
openings or dense forests,

I see the parrots in the woods, I see the  
papaw-tree and the blossoming titi;

Again, sailing in my coaster on deck, I  
coast off Georgia, I coast up the Caro-  
linas,

I see where the live-oak is growing, I see  
where the yellow-pine, the scented bay-  
tree, the lemon and orange, the cypress,  
the graceful palmetto,

I pass rude sea-headlands and enter Pam-  
lico sound through an inlet, and dart my  
vision inland;

O the cotton plant! the growing fields of  
rice, sugar, hemp!

<sup>1</sup> In the 1860 edition, with the title 'Longings for Home.'

The cactus guarded with thorns, the laurel-  
tree with large white flowers,

The range afar, the richness and barrenness,  
the old woods charged with mistletoe and  
trailing moss,

The piney odor and the gloom, the awful  
natural stillness, (here in these dense  
swamps the freebooter carries his gun,  
and the fugitive has his conceal'd hut; )

O the strange fascination of these half-  
known half-impassable swamps, infested  
by reptiles, resounding with the bellow of  
the alligator, the sad noises of the night-  
owl and the wild-cat, and the whirr of  
the rattlesnake,

The mocking-bird, the American mimic,  
singing all the forenoon, singing through  
the moon-lit night,

The humming-bird, the wild turkey, the  
raccoon, the opossum;

A Kentucky corn-field, the tall, graceful,  
long-leav'd corn, slender, flapping, bright  
green, with tassels, with beautiful ears  
each well-sheath'd in its husk;

O my heart! O tender and fierce pangs, I  
can stand them not, I will depart;

O to be a Virginian where I grew up! O to  
be a Carolinian!

O longings irrepressible! O I will go back  
to old Tennessee and never wander more.

1860.

MANNAHATTA<sup>2</sup>

I WAS asking for something specific and  
perfect for my city,

Whereupon lo! upsprang the aboriginal  
name.

<sup>2</sup> Compare 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,' 'A Broadway Pageant,' 'Give me the Splendid Silent Sun,' and the following passages from Whitman's *Specimen Days*:—

June 25. — Returned to New York last night. Out to-day on the waters for a sail in the wide bay, southeast of Staten island, — a rough, tossing ride, and a free sight — the long stretch of Sandy Hook, the highlands of Navesink, and the many vessels outward and inward bound. We came up through the midst of all, in the full sun. I especially enjoy'd the last hour or two. A moderate sea-breeze had set in; yet over the city, and the waters adjacent, was a thin haze, concealing nothing only adding to the beauty. From my point of view, as I write amid the soft breeze, with a sea-temperature, surely nothing on earth of its kind can go beyond this show. To the left the North river with its far vista — nearer, three or four war-ships, anchor'd peacefully — the Jersey side, the banks of Weehawken, the Palisades, and the gradually receding blue, lost in the distance — to the right the East river — the mast-hemm'd shores

Now I see what there is in a name, a word,  
liquid, sane, unruly, musical, self-suffi-  
cient,  
I see that the word of my city is that word  
from of old,

—the grand obelisk-like towers of the bridge, one on either side, in haze, yet plainly defin'd, giant brothers twain, throwing free graceful interlinking loops high across the tumbled tumultuous current below (the tide is just changing to its ebb)—the broad water-spread everywhere crowded—no, not crowded, but thick as stars in the sky—with all sorts and sizes of sail and steam vessels, plying ferry-boats, arriving and departing coasters, great ocean Dona, iron-black, modern, magnificent in size and power, fill'd with their incalculable value of human life and precious merchandise—with here and there, above all, those daring, careening things of grace and wonder, those white and shaded swift-darting fish-birds (I wonder if shore or sea elsewhere can outvie them), ever with their slanting spars, and fierce, pure, hawk-like beauty and motion—first-class New York sloop or schooner yachts, sailing, this fine day, the free sea in a good wind. And rising out of the midst, tall-topt, ship-hemm'd, modern, American, yet strangely oriental, V-shaped Manhattan, with its compact mass, its spires, its cloud-touching edifices group'd at the centre—the green of the trees, and all the white, brown and gray of the architecture well blended, as I see it, under a miracle of limpid sky, delicious light of heaven above, and June haze on the surface below.

**HUMAN AND HEROIC NEW YORK.**—The general subjective view of New York and Brooklyn (will not the time hasten when the two shall be municipally united in one, and named Manhattan?)—what I may call the human interior and exterior of these great seething oceanic populations, as I get it in this visit, is to me best of all. After an absence of many years (I went away at the outbreak of the secession war, and have never been back to stay since), again I resume with curiosity the crowds, the streets, I knew so well, Broadway, the ferries, the west side of the city, democratic Bowery—human appearances and manners as seen in all these, and along the wharves, and in the perpetual travel of the horse-cars, or the crowded excursion steamers, or in Wall and Nassau streets by day—in the places of amusement at night—bubbling and whirling and moving like its own environment of waters—endless humanity in all phases—Brooklyn also—taken in for the last three weeks. No need to specify minutely—enough to say that (making all allowances for the shadows and side-streaks of a million-headed-city) the brief total of the impressions, the human qualities, of these vast cities, is to me comforting, even heroic, beyond statement. Alertness, generally fine physique, clear eyes that look straight at you, a singular combination of reticence and self-possession, with good nature and friendliness—a prevailing range of acceding manners, taste and intellect, surely beyond any elsewhere upon earth—and a palpable out-cropping of that personal comradeship I look forward to as the subtlest, strongest future hold of this many-item'd Union—are not only constantly visible here in these mighty channels of men, but they form the rule and average. To-day, I should say—defiant of cynics and pessimists, and with a full knowledge of all their exceptions—an appreciative and perceptive study of the current humanity of New York gives the directest proof yet of successful Democracy, and of the solution of that paradox, the eligibility of the free and fully developed individual with the paramount aggregate. In old age, lame and sick, pondering for years on many a doubt and danger for this republic of ours—fully aware of all that can be said on the other side—I find in this

Because I see that word nested in nests of  
water-bays, superb,  
Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships  
and steamships, an island sixteen miles  
long, solid-founded,  
Numberless crowded streets, high growths  
of iron, slender, strong, light, splendidly  
uprising toward clear skies,  
Tides swift and ample, well-loved by me,  
toward sundown,  
The flowing sea-currents, the little islands,  
larger adjoining islands, the heights, the  
villas,  
The countless masts, the white shore-steam-  
ers, the lighters, the ferry-boats, the black  
sea-steamers well-model'd,  
The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses  
of business, the houses of business of the  
ship-merchants and money-brokers, the  
river-streets,  
Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thou-  
sand in a week,  
The carts hauling goods, the manly race  
of drivers of horses, the brown-faced  
sailors,  
The summer air, the bright sun shining, and  
the sailing clouds aloft,  
The winter snows, the sleigh-bells, the  
broken ice in the river, passing along up  
or down with the flood-tide or ebb-tide,  
The mechanics of the city, the masters,  
well-form'd, beautiful-faced, looking you  
straight in the eyes,  
Trottoirs throng'd, vehicles, Broadway, the  
women, the shops and shows,  
A million people—manners free and superb  
—open voices—hospitality—the most  
courageous and friendly young men,  
City of hurried and sparkling waters! city  
of spires and masts!  
City nested in bays! my city!

1860.

visit to New York, and the daily contact and rapport with its myriad people, on the scale of the oceans and tides, the best, most effective medicine my soul has yet partaken—the grandest physical habitat and surroundings of land and water the globe affords—namely, Manhattan island and Brooklyn, which the future shall join in one city—city of superb democracy, amid superb surroundings. Complete Prose Works, Small, Maynard & Co., pp. 109-111.)

See also *Specimen Days*, May 24, 1879, 'Two City Areas, Certain Hours,' Prose Works, pp. 126, 127; May 16 to 22, 'Central Park Walks and Talks,' Prose Works, pp. 128, 129; July 29, 1881, 'My Passion for Ferries,' 'Broadway Sights,' 'Omnibus Jaunts,' Prose Works, pp. 11-13; and also the *Collect*, Prose Works, pp. 206, 208, quoted in part in the note on 'Give me the splendid silent sun,' p. 578.

## MYSELF AND MINE

**MYSELF** and mine gymnastic ever,  
 To stand the cold or heat, to take good aim  
 with a gun, to sail a boat, to manage  
 horses, to beget superb children,  
 To speak readily and clearly, to feel at  
 home among common people,  
 And to hold our own in terrible positions  
 on land and sea.

Not for an embroiderer,  
 (There will always be plenty of embroider-  
 ers, I welcome them also,)  
 But for the fibre of things and for inherent  
 men and women.

Not to chisel ornaments,  
 But to chisel with free stroke the heads  
 and limbs of plenteous supreme Gods,  
 that the States may realize them walking  
 and talking.

Let me have my own way, 10  
 Let others promulge the laws, I will make  
 no account of the laws,  
 Let others praise eminent men and hold up  
 peace, I hold up agitation and conflict,  
 I praise no eminent man, I rebuke to his  
 face the one that was thought most wor-  
 thy.

(Who are you ? and what are you secretly  
 guilty of all your life ?  
 Will you turn aside all your life ? will you  
 grub and chatter all your life ?  
 And who are you, blabbing by rote, years,  
 pages, languages, reminiscences,  
 Unwitting to-day that you do not know  
 how to speak properly a single word ?)

Let others finish specimens, I never finish  
 specimens,  
 I start them by exhaustless laws as Nature  
 does, fresh and modern continually.

I give nothing as duties, 20  
 What others give as duties I give as living  
 impulses,  
 (Shall I give the heart's action as a duty ?)

Let others dispose of questions, I dispose of  
 nothing, I arouse unanswerable questions,  
 Who are they I see and touch, and what  
 about them ?

What about these likes of myself that draw  
 me so close by tender directions and in-  
 directions ?

I call to the world to distrust the accounts  
 of my friends, but listen to my enemies,  
 as I myself do,  
 I charge you forever reject those who would  
 expound me, for I cannot expound myself,  
 I charge that there be no theory or school  
 founded out of me,  
 I charge you to leave all free, as I have left  
 all free.

After me, vista ! 30  
 O I see life is not short, but immeasurably  
 long,  
 I henceforth tread the world chaste, tem-  
 perate, an early riser, a steady grower,  
 Every hour the semen of centuries, and  
 still of centuries.

I must follow up these continual lessons of  
 the air, water, earth,  
 I perceive I have no time to lose.

1860.

## A BROADWAY PAGEANT

## I

OVER the Western sea hither from Nippon <sup>1</sup>  
 come,  
 Courteous, the swart-cheek'd two-sworded  
 envoys,  
 Leaning back in their open barouches, bare-  
 headed, impassive,  
 Ride to-day through Manhattan.<sup>2</sup>

Libertad ! I do not know whether others be-  
 hold what I behold,  
 In the procession along with the nobles of  
 Nippon, the errand-bearers,  
 Bringing up the rear, hovering above,  
 around, or in the ranks marching,  
 But I will sing you a song of what I behold  
 Libertad.

<sup>1</sup> Nippon, the native name of Japan.

<sup>2</sup> In the edition of 1865 the poem begins : —

## A BROADWAY PAGEANT

(Reception Japanese Embassy, June 16, 1860.)

Over sea, hither from Nippon,  
 Courteous, the Princes of Asia, swart-cheek'd princes,  
 First-comers, guests, two-sworded princes,  
 Lesson-giving princes, leaning back in their open barouches,  
 bare-headed, impassive,  
 This day they ride through Manhattan.

When million-footed Manhattan unpent  
 descends to her pavements,  
 When the thunder-cracking guns arouse me  
 with the proud roar I love, 10  
 When the round-mouth'd guns out of the  
 smoke and smell I love spit their salutes,  
 When the fire-flashing guns have fully  
 alerted me, and heaven-clouds canopy my  
 city with a delicate thin haze,  
 When gorgeous the countless straight stems,  
 the forests at the wharves, thicken with  
 colors,  
 When every ship richly drest carries her  
 flag at the peak,  
 When pennants trail and street-festoons  
 hang from the windows,  
 When Broadway is entirely given up to  
 foot-passengers and foot-standers, when  
 the mass is densest,  
 When the façades of the houses are alive  
 with people, when eyes gaze riveted tens  
 of thousands at a time,  
 When the guests from the islands advance,  
 when the pageant moves forward visible,  
 When the summons is made, when the an-  
 swer that waited thousands of years an-  
 swers,  
 I too arising, answering, descend to the  
 pavements, merge with the crowd, and  
 gaze with them. 20

2

Superb-faced Manhattan !  
 Comrade Americanos ! to us, then at last  
 the Orient comes.

To us, my city,  
 Where our tall-topt marble and iron beau-  
 ties range on opposite sides, to walk in  
 the space between,  
 To-day our Antipodes comes.

The Originatress comes, 1  
 The nest of languages, the bequeather of  
 poems, the race of eld,  
 Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with mus-  
 ings, hot with passion,  
 Sultry with perfume, with ample and flow-  
 ing garments,  
 With sunburnt visage, with intense soul and  
 glittering eyes, 30  
 The race of Brahma comes.

<sup>1</sup> Here follows, in the original edition : —

The land of Paradise — land of the Caucasus — the nest of  
 birth, . . .

See my cantabile ! these and more are flash-  
 ing to us from the procession,  
 As it moves changing, a kaleidoscope divine  
 it moves changing before us.

For not the envoys nor the tann'd Japanese  
 from his island only,<sup>2</sup>  
 Lithe and silent the Hindoo appears, the  
 Asiatic continent itself appears, the past,  
 the dead,  
 The murky night-morning of wonder and  
 fable inscrutable,  
 The envelop'd mysteries, the old and un-  
 known hive-bees,  
 The north, the sweltering south, eastern  
 Assyria, the Hebrews, the ancient of  
 ancients,  
 Vast desolated cities, the gliding present,  
 all of these and more are in the pageant-  
 procession.

Geography, the world, is in it, 40  
 The Great Sea, the brood of islands, Poly-  
 nesia, the coast beyond,  
 The coast you henceforth are facing —  
 you Libertad ! from your Western golden  
 shores,  
 The countries there with their popula-  
 tions, the millions en-masse are curiously  
 here,  
 The swarming market-places, the temples  
 with idols ranged along the sides or at  
 the end, bonze, brahmin, and llama,  
 Mandarin, farmer, merchant, mechanic, and  
 fisherman,  
 The singing-girl and the dancing-girl, the  
 ecstatic persons, the secluded emperors,  
 Confucius himself, the great poets and  
 heroes, the warriors, the castes, all,<sup>3</sup>  
 Trooping up, crowding from all directions,  
 from the Altay mountains,  
 From Thibet, from the four winding and  
 far-flowing rivers of China,  
 From the southern peninsulas and the demi-  
 continental islands, from Malaysia, 50  
 These and whatever belongs to them pal-  
 pable show forth to me, and are seiz'd  
 by me,

<sup>2</sup> In the original edition this line reads : —

Not the errand-bearing princes only, nor the tann'd Japanese  
 only.

<sup>3</sup> In the original edition these two lines read : —

The singing-girl and the dancing-girl — the ecstatic person  
 — the divine Buddha;  
 The secluded Emperors — Confucius himself — the great  
 poets and heroes — the warriors, the castes, all.

And I am seiz'd by them, and friendly  
held by them,  
Till as here them all I chant, Libertad!  
for themselves and for you.

For I too raising my voice join the ranks  
of this pageant,  
I am the chanter, I chant aloud over the  
pageant,  
I chant the world on my Western sea,  
I chant copious the islands beyond, thick  
as stars in the sky,  
I chant the new empire grander than any  
before, as in a vision it comes to me,  
I chant America the mistress, I chant a  
greater supremacy,  
I chant projected a thousand blooming  
cities yet in time on those groups of sea-  
islands, 60  
My sail-ships and steam-ships threading  
the archipelagoes,  
My stars and stripes fluttering in the wind,  
Commerce opening, the sleep of ages hav-  
ing done its work, races reborn, re-  
fresh'd,  
Lives, works resumed — the object I know  
not — but the old, the Asiatic renew'd as  
it must be,  
Commencing from this day surrounded by  
the world.

3

And you Libertad of the world!  
You shall sit in the middle well-pois'd  
thousands and thousands of years,  
As to-day from one side the nobles of Asia  
come to you,  
As to-morrow from the other side the  
queen of England sends her eldest son  
to you.  
The sign is reversing, the orb is enclosed, 70  
The ring is circled, the journey is done,  
The box-lid is but perceptibly open'd, never-  
theless the perfume pours copiously out  
of the whole box.

Young Libertad! with the venerable Asia,  
the all-mother,  
Be considerate with her now and ever hot  
Libertad, for you are all,  
Bend your proud neck to the long-off  
mother now sending messages over the  
archipelagoes to you,  
Bend your prond neck low for once, young  
Libertad.

Were the children straying westward so  
long? so wide the tramping?  
Were the precedent dim ages debouching  
westward from Paradise so long?  
Were the centuries steadily footing it that  
way, all the while unknown, for you, for  
reasons?

They are justified, they are accomplish'd,  
they shall now be turn'd the other way  
also, to travel toward you thence, 80  
They shall now also march obediently east-  
ward for your sake Libertad.<sup>1</sup>

1860.

1865.

### PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

COME my tan-faced children,  
Follow well in order, get your weapons  
ready,  
Have you your pistols? have you your  
sharp-edged axes?  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,  
We must march my darlings, we must bear  
the brunt of danger,  
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest  
on us depend,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,  
So impatient, full of action, full of manly  
pride and friendship, 10  
Plain I see you Western youths, see you  
tramping with the foremost,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?  
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied  
over there beyond the seas?

<sup>1</sup> THE EAST. — What a subject for a poem! Indeed,  
where else a more pregnant, more splendid one?  
Where one more idealistic-real, more subtle, more sen-  
suous-delicate? The East, answering all lands, all  
ages, peoples; touching all senses, here, immediate,  
now — and yet so indescribably far off — such retro-  
spect! The East — long-stretching — so losing itself —  
the orient, the gardens of Asia, the womb of history  
and song — forth-issuing all those strange, dim caval-  
cades —

Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with  
passion,  
Sultry with perfume, with ample and flowing garments,  
With sunburnt visage, intense soul and glittering eyes.

Always the East — old, how incalculably old! And  
yet here the same — ours yet, fresh as a rose, to every  
morning, every life, to-day — and always will be.  
(WHITMAN, *Specimen Days*. Complete Prose Works,  
pp. 112, 113.)



We take up the task eternal, and the burden  
and the lesson,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind,  
We debouch upon a newer mightier world,  
varied world,  
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world  
of labor and the march,  
Pioneers! O pioneers! 20

We detachments steady throwing,  
Down the edges, through the passes, up the  
mountains steep,  
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as  
we go the unknown ways,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We primeval forests felling,  
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and  
piercing deep the mines within,  
We the surface broad surveying, we the  
virgin soil upheaving,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we,  
From the peaks gigantic, from the great  
sierras and the high plateaus, 30  
From the mine and from the gully, from  
the hunting trail we come,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,  
Central inland race are we, from Missouri,  
with the continental blood intervein'd,  
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the  
Southern, all the Northern,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O resistless restless race!  
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches  
with tender love for all!  
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with  
love for all,  
Pioneers! O pioneers! 40

Raise the mighty mother mistress,  
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all  
the starry mistress (bend your heads all),  
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern,  
impassive, weapon'd mistress,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children,  
By those swarms upon our rear we must  
never yield or falter,

Ages back in ghostly millions frowning  
there behind us urging,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,  
With accessions ever waiting, with the  
places of the dead quickly fill'd, 50  
Through the battle, through defeat, moving  
yet and never stopping,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!  
Are there some of us to droop and die? has  
the hour come?  
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon  
and sure the gap is fill'd,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,  
Falling in they beat for us, with the West-  
ern movement beat,  
Holding single or together, steady moving  
to the front, all for us,  
Pioneers! O pioneers! 60

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,  
All the forms and shows, all the workmen  
at their work,  
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the  
masters with their slaves,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers,  
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the  
righteous and the wicked,  
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the  
living, all the dying,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,  
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on  
our way, 70  
Through these shores amid the shadows,  
with the apparitions pressing,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting bowling orb!  
Lo, the brother orbs around, all the cluster-  
ing suns and planets,  
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights  
with dreams,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us,  
All for primal needed work, while the fol-  
lowers there in embryo wait behind,



**W**e to-day's procession heading, we the  
route for travel clearing,  
Pioneers! O pioneers! 80

O you daughters of the West!  
**O** you young and elder daughters! O you  
mothers and you wives!  
**N**ever must you be divided, in our ranks  
you move united,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!  
(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may  
rest, you have done your work,)  
**S**oon I hear you coming warbling, soon you  
rise and tramp amid us,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,  
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the  
peaceful and the studious, 90  
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us  
the tame enjoyment,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?  
Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they  
lock'd and bolted doors?  
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket  
on the ground,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?  
Was the road of late so toilsome? did we  
stop discouraged nodding on our way?  
Yet a passing hour I yield you in your  
tracks to pause oblivious,  
Pioneers! O pioneers! 100

Till with sound of trumpet,  
Far, far off the daybreak call — hark!  
how loud and clear I hear it wind,  
Swift! to the head of the army! — swift!  
spring to your places,  
Pioneers! O pioneers! 1865.

### FROM PAUMANOK STARTING I FLY LIKE A BIRD

**F**ROM Paumanok starting I fly like a  
bird,  
Around and around to soar to sing the idea  
of all,

To the north betaking myself to sing there  
arctic songs,  
To Kanada till I absorb Kanada in myself,  
to Michigan then,  
To Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, to sing  
their songs (they are inimitable);  
Then to Ohio and Indiana to sing theirs, to  
Missouri and Kansas and Arkansas to  
sing theirs,  
To Tennessee and Kentucky, to the Caro-  
linas and Georgia to sing theirs,  
To Texas and so along up toward California,  
to roam accepted everywhere;  
To sing first (to the tap of the war-drum  
if need be),  
The idea of all, of the Western world one  
and inseparable,  
And then the song of each member of these  
States.

1865.

### EIGHTEEN SIXTY-ONE

**A**RM'D year — year of the struggle,  
No dainty rhymes or sentimental love  
verses for you terrible year,  
Not you as some pale poetling seated at a  
desk lisping cadenzas piano,  
But as a strong man erect, clothed in blue  
clothes, advancing, carrying a rifle on  
your shoulder,  
With well-gristled body and sunburnt face  
and hands, with a knife in the belt at  
your side,  
As I heard you shouting loud, your sonor-  
ous voice ringing across the continent,  
Your masculine voice O year, as rising  
amid the great cities,  
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you as  
one of the workmen, the dwellers in  
Manhattan,  
Or with large steps crossing the prairies  
out of Illinois and Indiana,  
Rapidly crossing the West with springy  
gait and descending the Alleghanies,  
Or down from the great lakes or in Penn-  
sylvania, or on deck along the Ohio river,  
Or southward along the Tennessee or Cum-  
berland rivers, or at Chattanooga on the  
mountain top,  
Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy  
limbs clothed in blue, bearing weapons,  
robust year,  
Heard your determin'd voice launch'd forth  
again and again,

Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of  
the round-lipp'd cannon,  
I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, dis-  
traced year.

1865.

### BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

BEAT! beat! drums! — blow! bugles!  
blow!  
Through the windows — through doors —  
burst like a ruthless force,  
Into the solemn church, and scatter the  
congregation,  
Into the school where the scholar is study-  
ing;  
Leave not the bridegroom quiet — no hap-  
piness must he have now with his bride,  
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, plough-  
ing his field or gathering his grain,  
So fierce you whirr and pound you drums  
— so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles!  
blow!  
Over the traffic of cities — over the rumble  
of wheels in the streets;  
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in  
the houses? no sleepers must sleep in  
those beds,  
No bargainers' bargains by day — no  
brokers or speculators — would they con-  
tinue?  
Would the talkers be talking? would the  
singer attempt to sing?  
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state  
his case before the judge?  
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums — you  
bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles!  
blow!  
Make no parley — stop for no expostulation,  
Mind not the timid — mind not the weeper  
or prayer,  
Mind not the old man beseeching the young  
man,  
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the  
mother's entreaties,  
Make even the trestles to shake the dead  
where they lie awaiting the hearses,  
So strong you thump O terrible drums —  
so loud you bugles blow.

1865.

### CAVALRY CROSSING A FORD

A LINE in long array where they wind be-  
twixt green islands,  
They take a serpentine course, their arms  
flash in the sun — hark to the musical  
clank,  
Behold the silvery river, in it the splashing  
horses loitering stop to drink,  
Behold the brown-faced men, each group,  
each person a picture, the negligent rest  
on the saddles,  
Some emerge on the opposite bank, others  
are just entering the ford — while,  
Scarlet and blue and snowy white,  
The guidon flags flutter gayly in the wind.

1865.

### BIVOUAC ON A MOUNTAIN SIDE<sup>1</sup>

I SEE before me now a traveling army  
halting,  
Below a fertile valley spread, with barns  
and the orchards of summer,  
Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain,  
abrupt, in places rising high,  
Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars,  
with tall shapes dingily seen,  
The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and  
far, some away up on the mountain,  
The shadowy forms of men and horses,  
looming, large-sized, flickering,  
And over all the sky — the sky! far, far  
out of reach, studded, breaking out, the  
eternal stars.

1865.

### BY THE BIVOUAC'S FITFUL FLAME

By the bivouac's fitful flame,  
A procession winding around me, solemn  
and sweet and slow — but first I note,  
The tents of the sleeping army, the fields'  
and woods' dim outline,  
The darkness lit by spots of kindled fire,  
the silence,  
Like a phantom far or near an occasional  
figure moving,  
The shrubs and trees (as I lift my eyes  
they seem to be stealthily watching me),

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Specimen Days*, July 4, 6, 10, 1863. Com-  
plete Prose Works, p. 11.

While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and wondrous thoughts,  
Of life and death, of home and the past and loved, and of those that are far away;  
A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the ground,  
By the bivouac's fitful flame.

1865.

## I SAW OLD GENERAL AT BAY

I SAW old General at bay,  
(Old as he was, his gray eyes yet shone out in battle like stars,)  
His small force was now completely hemm'd in, in his works,  
He call'd for volunteers to run the enemy's lines, a desperate emergency,  
I saw a hundred and more step forth from the ranks, but two or three were selected,  
I saw them receive their orders aside, they listen'd with care, the adjutant was very grave,  
I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their lives.

1865.

## VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE NIGHT

VIGIL strange I kept on the field one night;  
When you my son and my comrade dropt at my side that day,  
One look I but gave which your dear eyes return'd with a look I shall never forget,  
One touch of your hand to mine O boy, reach'd up as you lay on the ground,  
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested battle,  
Till late in the night reliev'd to the place at last again I made my way,  
Found you in death so cold dear comrade, found your body son of responding kisses (never again on earth responding),  
Bared your face in the starlight, curious the scene, cool blew the moderate night-wind,  
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me the battle-field spreading,  
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet there in the fragrant silent night,  
But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh, long, long I gazed,

Then on the earth partially reclining sat by your side leaning my chin in my hands,  
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you dearest comrade — not a tear, not a word,  
Vigil of silence, love and death, vigil for you my son and my soldier,  
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones upward stole,  
Vigil final for you brave boy, (I could not save you, swift was your death,  
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living, I think we shall surely meet again,)  
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the dawn appear'd,  
My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his form,  
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head and carefully under feet,  
And there and then and bathed by the rising sun, my son in his grave, in his rude-dug grave I deposited,  
Ending my vigil strange with that, vigil of night and battle-field dim,  
Vigil for boy of responding kisses (never again on earth responding),  
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain, vigil I never forget, how as day brighten'd,  
I rose from the chill ground and folded my soldier well in his blanket,  
And buried him where he fell.

1865.

## COME UP FROM THE FIELDS FATHER

COME up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete,  
And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.

Lo, 't is autumn,  
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,  
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering in the moderate wind,  
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the trellis'd vines,  
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines?  
Smell you the buckwheat where the bees were lately buzzing?)

Above all, lo, the sky so calm, so transparent after the rain, and with wondrous clouds,  
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm prospers well. 10

Down in the fields all prospers well,  
But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's call,  
And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps trembling,  
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,  
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,  
O a strange hand writes for our dear son,  
O stricken mother's soul!  
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches the main words only,  
Sentences broken, *gunshot wound in the breast, cavalry skirmish, taken to hospital,*  
*At present low, but will soon be better.* 21

Ah now the single figure to me,  
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio with all its cities and farms,  
Sickly white in the face and dull in the head, very faint,  
By the jamb of a door leans.

*Grieve not so, dear mother* (the just-grown daughter speaks through her sobs,  
The little sisters huddle around speechless and dismay'd),  
*See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.*

Alas poor boy, he will never be better (nor may-be needs to be better, that brave and simple soul),  
While they stand at home at the door he is dead already, 30  
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,  
She with thin form presently drest in black,  
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully sleeping, often waking,  
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing,

O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape and withdraw,  
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

1863.

### A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAY-BREAK GRAY AND DIM

A SIGHT in camp in the daybreak gray and dim,  
As from my tent I emerge so early sleepless.  
As slow I walk in the cool fresh air the path near by the hospital tent,  
Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out there untended lying,  
Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woolen blanket,  
Gray and heavy blanket, folding, covering all

Curious I halt and silent stand,  
Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest the first just lift the blanket;  
Who are you elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-gray'd hair and flesh all sunken about the eyes?  
Who are you my dear comrade?

Then to the second I step — and who are you my child and darling?  
Who are you sweet boy with cheeks yet blooming?

Then to the third — a face nor child nor old, very calm, as of beautiful yellow-white ivory;  
Young man I think I know you — I think this face is the face of the Christ himself,  
Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he lies.

1863.

### AS TOILSOME I WANDER'D VIRGINIA'S WOODS

As toilsome I wander'd Virginia's woods,  
To the music of rustling leaves kick'd by my feet (for 't was autumn),  
I mark'd at the foot of a tree the grave of a soldier;  
Mortally wounded he and buried on the retreat (easily all could I understand),

The halt of a mid-day hour, when up! no  
time to lose — yet this sign left,  
On a tablet scrawl'd and nail'd on the tree  
by the grave,  
*Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.*

Long, long I muse, then on my way go  
wandering,  
Many a changeful season to follow, and  
many a scene of life,  
Yet at times through changeful season and  
scene, abrupt, alone, or in the crowded  
street,  
Comes before me the unknown soldier's  
grave, comes the inscription rude in Vir-  
ginia's woods,  
*Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.*

1865.

THE WOUND-DRESSER<sup>1</sup>

I

AN old man bending I come among new  
faces,  
Years looking backward resuming in  
answer to children,

<sup>1</sup> See the letter in Bucke's *Whitman*, pp. 38-40.

With this, and all the poems relating to the Civil War, should be read the book entitled *The Wound-Dresser*, a collection of letters written from the field and from the hospitals in Washington and the parts of *Spectator Days* picturing Whitman's experiences in the war and in the hospitals, in his Complete Prose Works, pp. 15-75. A few passages may be quoted: —

'The men, whatever their condition, lie there, and patiently wait till their turn comes to be taken up. Near by, the ambulances are now arriving in clusters, and one after another is call'd to back up and take its load. Extreme cases are sent off on stretchers. The men generally make little or no ado, whatever their sufferings. A few groans that cannot be suppress'd, and occasionally a scream of pain as they lift a man into the ambulance. To-day, as I write, hundreds more are expected, and to-morrow and the next day more, and so on for many days. Quite often they arrive at the rate of 1000 a day. . . .

'It is Sunday afternoon, middle of summer, hot and oppressive, and very silent through the ward. I am taking care of a critical case, now lying in a half lethargy. Near where I sit is a suffering rebel, from the 8th Louisiana; his name is Irving. He has been here a long time, badly wounded, and lately had his leg amputated; it is not doing very well. Right opposite me is a sick soldier-boy, laid down with his clothes on, sleeping, looking much wasted, his pallid face on his arm. I see by the yellow trimming on his jacket that he is a cavalry boy. I step softly over and find by his card that he is named William Cone, of the 1st Maine cavalry, and his folks live in Skowhegan.

'One hot day toward the middle of June, I gave the inmates of Carver hospital a general ice cream treat, purchasing a large quantity, and, under convoy of the doctor or head nurse, going around personally through the wards to see to its distribution.

' . . . I do not see that I do much good to these

Come tell us old man, as from young men  
and maidens that love me,  
(Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the  
alarum, and urge relentless war,

wounded and dying; but I cannot leave them. Once in a while some youngster holds on to me convulsively, and I do what I can for him; at any rate, stop with him and sit near him for hours, if he wishes it. . . .

' . . . I soon get acquainted anywhere in camp, with officers or men, and am always well used. Sometimes I go down on picket with the regiments I know best. . . .

' . . . In these wards, or on the field, as I thus continue to go round, I have come to adapt myself to each emergency, after its kind or call, however trivial, however solemn, every one justified and made real under its circumstances — not only visits and cheering talk and little gifts — not only washing and dressing wounds (I have some cases where the patient is unwilling any one should do this but me) — but passages from the Bible, expounding them, prayer at the bedside, explanations of doctrine, &c. (I think I see my friends smiling at this confession, but I was never more in earnest in my life.) In camp and everywhere, I was in the habit of reading or giving recitations to the men. . . .

' . . . I went through the rooms, downstairs and up. Some of the men were dying. I had nothing to give at that visit, but wrote a few letters to folks home, mothers, &c. Also talk'd to three or four, who seem'd most susceptible to it, and needing it. . . .

'In one bed a young man, Marcus Small, company K, 7th Maine — sick with dysentery and typhoid fever — pretty critical case — I talk with him often — he thinks he will die — looks like it indeed. I write a letter for him home to East Livermore, Maine — I let him talk to me a little, but not much, advise him to keep very quiet — do most of the talking myself — stay quite a while with him, as he holds on to my hand — talk to him in a cheering, but slow, low, and measured manner — talk about his furlough, and going home as soon as he is able to travel.'

[From a letter to a dead soldier's mother]; . . . I will write you a few lines — as a casual friend that sat by his death-bed. Your son, Corporal Frank H. Irwin, was wounded near Fort Fisher, Virginia, March 25th, 1865 — the wound was in the left knee, pretty bad . . . I visited and sat by him frequently, as he was fond of having me. The last ten or twelve days of April I saw that his case was critical. He previously had some fever, with cold spells. The last week in April he was much of the time flighty — but always mild and gentle. He died first of May. The actual cause of death was pyæmia (the absorption of the matter in the system instead of its discharge). Frank, as far as I saw, had everything requisite in surgical treatment, nursing, &c. He had watches much of the time. He was so good and well-behaved and affectionate, I myself liked him very much. I was in the habit of coming in afternoons and sitting by him, and soothing him, and he liked to have me — liked to put his arm out and lay his hand on my knee — would keep it so a long while. Toward the last he was more restless and flighty at night. . . . All the time he was out of his head not one single bad word or idea escaped him. It was remark'd that many a man's conversation in his senses was not half as good as Frank's delirium. He seem'd quite willing to die — he had become very weak and had suffer'd a good deal, and was perfectly resign'd, poor boy. I do not know his past life, but I feel as if it must have been good. At any rate what I saw of him here, under the most trying circumstances, with a painful wound, and among strangers, I can say that he behaved so brave, so composed, and so sweet and af-

But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face  
 droop'd and I resign'd myself,  
 To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or  
 silently watch the dead;) <sup>1</sup>  
 Years hence of these scenes, of these fu-  
 rious passions, these chances,  
 Of unsurpass'd heroes (was one side so  
 brave? the other was equally brave;) <sup>1</sup>  
 Now be witness again, paint the mightiest  
 armies of earth,  
 Of those armies so rapid so wondrous what  
 saw you to tell us? <sup>10</sup>  
 What stays with you latest and deepest?  
 of curious panics,  
 Of hard-fought engagements or sieges tre-  
 mendous what deepest remains?

2

O maidens and young men I love and that  
 love me,  
 What you ask of my days those the  
 strangest and sudden your talking recalls,  
 Soldier alert I arrive after a long march  
 cover'd with sweat and dust,  
 In the nick of time I come, plunge in the  
 fight, loudly shout in the rush of success-  
 ful charge,  
 Enter the captur'd works — yet lo, like a  
 swift-running river they fade,  
 Pass and are gone they fade — I dwell not  
 on soldiers' perils or soldiers' joys  
 (Both I remember well — many the hard-  
 ships, few the joys, yet I was content).

But in silence, in dreams' projections, <sup>20</sup>  
 While the world of gain and appearance  
 and mirth goes on,

fectionate, it could not be surpass'd. And now like  
 many other noble and good men, after serving his  
 country as a soldier, he has yielded up his young life  
 at the very outset in her service. Such things are  
 gloomy — yet there is a text, 'God doeth all things  
 well' — the meaning of which, after due time, ap-  
 pears to the soul.

I thought perhaps a few words, though from a  
 stranger, about your son, from one who was with him  
 at the last, might be worth while — for I loved the  
 young man, though I but saw him immediately to lose  
 him. . . . W. W.

<sup>1</sup> The grand soldiers are not comprised in those of one  
 side, any more than the other. Here is a sample of an  
 unknown Southerner, a lad of seventeen. At the War  
 Department, a few days ago, I witness'd a presentation  
 of captured flags to the Secretary. Among others a  
 soldier named Gant, of the 104th Ohio Volunteers, pre-  
 sented a rebel battle-flag, which one of the officers  
 stated to me was borne to the mouth of our cannon  
 and planted there by a boy but seventeen years of age,  
 who actually endeavor'd to stop the muzzle of the gun  
 with fence-rails. He was kill'd in the effort, and the  
 flag-staff was sever'd by a shot from one of our men.  
 (*Specimen Days*, p. 27.)

So soon what is over forgotten, and waves  
 wash the imprints off the sand,  
 With hinged knees returning I enter the  
 doors (while for you up there,  
 Whoever you are, follow without noise and  
 be of strong heart).

Bearing the bandages, water and sponge,  
 Straight and swift to my wounded I go,  
 Where they lie on the ground after the  
 battle brought in,  
 Where their priceless blood reddens the  
 grass the ground,  
 Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or  
 under the roof'd hospital,  
 To the long rows of cots up and down each  
 side I return, <sup>30</sup>  
 To each and all one after another I draw  
 near, not one do I miss,  
 An attendant follows holding a tray, he  
 carries a refuse pail,  
 Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood,  
 emptied, and fill'd again.

I onward go, I stop,  
 With hinged knees and steady hand to  
 dress wounds,  
 I am firm with each, the pangs are sharp  
 yet unavoidable,  
 One turns to me his appealing eyes — poor  
 boy! I never knew you,  
 Yet I think I could not refuse this moment  
 to die for you, if that would save you.

3

On, on I go, (open doors of time! open  
 hospital doors!)  
 The crush'd head I dress (poor crazed hand  
 tear not the bandage away), <sup>40</sup>  
 The neck of the cavalry-man with the bul-  
 let through and through I examine,  
 Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed  
 already the eye, yet life struggles hard  
 (Come sweet death! be persuaded O  
 beautiful death!  
 In mercy come quickly).

From the stump of the arm, the amputated  
 hand,  
 I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough,  
 wash off the matter and blood,  
 Back on his pillow the soldier bends with  
 curv'd neck and side-falling head,  
 His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he  
 dares not look on the bloody stump,  
 And has not yet look'd on it.



I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep, 50  
But a day or two more, for see the frame  
all wasted and sinking,  
And the yellow-blue countenance see.

I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot  
with the bullet-wound,  
Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid  
gangrene, so sickening, so offensive,  
While the attendant stands behind aside  
me holding the tray and pail.

I am faithful, I do not give out,  
The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound  
in the abdomen,  
These and more I dress with impassive  
hand (yet deep in my breast a fire, a  
burning flame).

4

Thus in silence in dreams' projections,  
Returning, resuming, I thread my way  
through the hospitals, 60  
The hurt and wounded I pacify with sooth-  
ing hand,  
I sit by the restless all the dark night,  
some are so young,  
Some suffer so much, I recall the experi-  
ence sweet and sad,  
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this  
neck have cross'd and rested,  
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these  
bearded lips).

1865.

## GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

1

GIVE me the splendid silent sun with all his  
beams full-dazzling,  
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red  
from the orchard,  
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass  
grows,  
Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd  
grape,  
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me se-  
rene-moving animals teaching content,  
Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high  
plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I  
looking up at the stars,  
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of  
beautiful flowers where I can walk un-  
disturb'd,

Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd  
woman of whom I should never tire,  
Give me a perfect child, give me away aside  
from the noise of the world a rural do-  
mestic life,  
Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse  
by myself, for my own ears only, 10  
Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me  
again O Nature your primal sanities !

These demanding to have them (tired with  
ceaseless excitement, and rack'd by the  
war-strife),  
These to procure incessantly asking, rising  
in cries from my heart,  
While yet incessantly asking still I adhere  
to my city,  
Day upon day and year upon year O city,  
walking your streets,  
Where you hold me enchain'd a certain  
time refusing to give me up,  
Yet giving to make me glutt'd, enrich'd of  
soul, you give me forever faces;  
(Oh I see what I sought to escape, con-  
fronting, reversing my cries,  
I see my own soul trampling down what it  
ask'd for.)

2

Keep your splendid silent sun, 20  
Keep your woods O Nature, and the quiet  
places by the woods,  
Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and  
your corn-fields and orchards,  
Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields  
where the Ninth-month bees hum;  
Give me faces and streets — give me these  
phantoms incessant and endless along the  
trottoirs !  
Give me interminable eyes — give me  
women — give me comrades and lovers  
by the thousand !  
Let me see new ones every day — let me  
hold new ones by the hand every day !  
Give me such shows — give me the streets  
of Manhattan !  
Give me Broadway, with the soldiers march-  
ing — give me the sound of the trumpets  
and drums !  
(The soldiers in companies or regiments —  
some starting away, flush'd and reck-  
less,  
Some, their time up, returning with thinn'd  
ranks, young, yet very old, worn, march-  
ing, noticing nothing;) 30



Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black ships !  
 O such for me ! O an intense life, full to repletion and varied !  
 The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me !  
 The saloon of the steamer ! the crowded excursion for me ! the torchlight procession !  
 The dense brigade bound for the war, with high piled military wagons following ;  
 People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants,  
 Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating drums as now,  
 The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of muskets (even the sight of the wounded),  
 Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus !  
 Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.<sup>1</sup>

1865.

### LONG, TOO LONG AMERICA<sup>2</sup>

LONG, too long America,  
 Traveling roads all even and peaceful you learn'd from joys and prosperity only,  
 But now, ah now, to learn from crises of anguish, advancing, grappling with direst fate and recoiling not,  
 And now to conceive and show to the world what your children en-masse really are,  
 (For who except myself has yet conceiv'd what your children en-masse really are ?)

1865.

### OVER THE CARNAGE ROSE PROPHETIC A VOICE

OVER the carnage rose prophetic a voice,  
 Be not dishearten'd, affection shall solve the problems of freedom yet,

<sup>1</sup> Compare Whitman's *Collect* (Complete Prose Works, Small, Maynard & Co., p. 205) : —

'Always and more and more, as I cross the East and North rivers, the ferries, or with the pilots in their pilot-houses, or pass an hour in Wall Street, or the gold exchange, I realize (if we must admit such partialisms), that not Nature alone is great in her fields of freedom and the open air, in her storms, the shows of night and day, the mountains, forests, seas — but in the artificial, the work of man too is equally great — in this profusion of teeming humanity — in these ingenuities, streets, goods, houses, ships — these hurrying, feverish, electric crowds of men, their complicated business genius, (not least among the geniuses), and all this mighty, many-threaded wealth and industry concentrated here.'

<sup>2</sup> In the original edition the title and first line read:

Long, too long, O land,

Those who love each other shall become invincible,  
 They shall yet make Columbia victorious.

Sons of the Mother of All, you shall yet be victorious,  
 You shall yet laugh to scorn the attacks of all the remainder of the earth.

No danger shall balk Columbia's lovers,  
 If need be a thousand shall sternly immolate themselves for one.

One from Massachusetts shall be a Missourian's comrade,  
 From Maine and from hot Carolina, and another an Oregonese, shall be friends triune,  
 More precious to each other than all the riches of the earth.

To Michigan, Florida perfumes shall tenderly come,  
 Not the perfumes of flowers, but sweeter, and wafted beyond death.

It shall be customary in the houses and streets to see manly affection,  
 The most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face lightly,  
 The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers,  
 The continuance of Equality shall be comrades.<sup>3</sup>

These shall tie you and band you stronger than hoops of iron,  
 I, ecstatic, O partners ! O lands ! with the love of lovers tie you.

(Were you looking to be held together by lawyers ?

Or by an agreement on a paper ? or by arms ?

Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere.)

1865.

### OUT OF THE ROLLING OCEAN THE CROWD<sup>4</sup>

OUT of the rolling ocean the crowd came a drop gently to me,  
 Whispering *I love you, before long I die,*

<sup>3</sup> Taken in part from the poem 'States,' of the 1860 edition, quoted in the note on p. 561.

<sup>4</sup> Originally in *Drum-Taps*, but now included in the 'Children of Adam' section of *Leaves of Grass*.

*I have travel'd a long way merely to look on  
you to touch you,  
For I could not die till I once look'd on you,  
For I fear'd I might afterward lose you.*

Now we have met, we have look'd, we are  
safe,  
Return in peace to the ocean my love,  
I too am part of that ocean my love, we are  
not so much separated,  
Behold the great rondure, the cohesion of  
all, how perfect!  
But as for me, for you, the irresistible sea  
is to separate us,  
As for an hour carrying us diverse, yet can-  
not carry us diverse forever;  
Be not impatient — a little space — know  
you I salute the air, the ocean and the  
land,  
Every day at sundown for your dear sake  
my love.

1865.

### WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER<sup>1</sup>

WHEN I heard the learn'd astronomer,  
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged  
in columns before me,

<sup>1</sup> To-night, after leaving the hospital at 10 o'clock (I had been on self-imposed duty some five hours, pretty closely confined), I wander'd a long time around Washington. The night was sweet, very clear, sufficiently cool, a voluptuous half-moon, slightly golden, the space near it of a transparent blue-gray tinge. I walk'd up Pennsylvania avenue, and then to Seventh street, and a long while around the Patent-office. Somehow it look'd rebukefully strong, majestic, there in the delicate moonlight. The sky, the planets, the constellations all so bright, so calm, so expressively silent, so soothing, after those hospital scenes. I wander'd to and fro till the moist moon set, long after midnight. (*Specimen Days*, October 20, 1863. Complete Prose Works, p. 41.)

See also *Specimen Days*, July 22, 1878, Prose Works, pp. 111, 112; April 5, 1879, Prose Works, pp. 118-121; February 10, 1881, Prose Works, pp. 162, 163.

Compare one of Whitman's 'Notes on the Meaning and Intention of *Leaves of Grass*,' in *Notes and Fragments*, p. 58: —

Book learning is good, let none dispense with it, but a man may [be] of great excellence and effect with very little of it. Washington had but little. Andrew Jackson also. Fulton also. Frequently it stands in the way of real manliness and power. Powerful persons and the first inventors and poets of the earth never come from the depths of the schools — never. There is a man who is no chemist, nor linguist, nor antiquary, nor mathematician — yet he takes very easily the perfection of these sciences, or of the belles lettres, and eats of the fruit of all. Erudition is low among the glories of humanity. I think if those who best embody it were collected together this day in the public assembly it would be grand. But powerful unlearned persons are also grand.

When I was shown the charts and diagrams,  
to add, divide, and measure them,  
When I sitting heard the astronomer where  
he lectured with much applause in the  
lecture-room,  
How soon unaccountable I became tired and  
sick,  
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off  
by myself,  
In the mystical moist night-air, and from  
time to time,  
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

1865.

### SHUT NOT YOUR DOORS

SHUT not your doors to me proud libraries,  
For that which was lacking on all your well-  
fill'd shelves, yet needed most, I bring,  
Forth from the war emerging, a book I have  
made,  
The words of my book nothing, the drift of  
it every thing,  
A book separate, not link'd with the rest  
nor felt by the intellect,  
But you ye untold latencies will thrill to  
every page.<sup>2</sup>

1865.

### TO A CERTAIN CIVILIAN<sup>3</sup>

DID you ask dulcet rhymes from me?  
Did you seek the civilian's peaceful and  
languishing rhymes?

But all book knowledge is important as helping one's  
personal qualities, and the use and power of a man. Let  
a man learn to run, leap, swim, wrestle, fight, to take  
good aim, to manage horses, to speak readily and clearly  
and without mannerism, to feel at home among common  
people and able to hold his own in terrible positions.  
With these . . .

Behind — Eluding — Mocking all the text-books and  
professor's expositions and proofs and diagrams and  
practical show, stand or lie millions of all the most beau-  
tiful and common facts. We are so proud of our learn-  
ing! As if it were anything to analyze fluids and call  
certain parts oxygen or hydrogen, or to map out stars  
and call . . .

<sup>2</sup> In the original version this poem reads: —

Shut not your doors to me, proud libraries,  
For that which was lacking among you all, yet needed most,  
I bring:  
A book I have made for your dear sake, O soldiers,  
And for you, O soul of man, and you, love of comrades;  
The words of my book nothing, the life of it everything:  
A book separate, not link'd with the rest, nor felt by the  
intellect;  
But you will feel every word, O Libertad! arm'd Libertad!  
It shall pass by the intellect to swim the sea, the air,  
With joy with you, O soul of man.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the opening stanzas of Emerson's 'Mer-  
lin.'

Did you find what I sang erewhile so hard  
to follow ?

Why I was not singing erewhile for you to  
follow, to understand — nor am I now

(I have been born of the same as the war  
was born,

The drum-corps' rattle is ever to me sweet  
music, I love well the martial dirge,

With slow wail and convulsive throb lead-  
ing the officer's funeral);

What to such as you anyhow such a poet as  
I ? therefore leave my works,

And go lull yourself with what you can  
understand, and with piano-tunes,

For I lull nobody, and you will never un-  
derstand me.<sup>1</sup>

1865.

<sup>1</sup> This is a poem which some of Whitman's admirers are fond of quoting to those who fail to appreciate him. It is hardly fair to him, however, to take it apart from his own more modest expression of the same ideas, in 'A Backward Glance o'er Travel'd Roads: —'

'And whether my friends claim it for me or not, I know well enough, too, that in respect to pictorial talent, dramatic situations, and especially in verbal melody and all the conventional technique of poetry, not only the divine works that to-day stand ahead in the world's reading, but dozens more, transcend (some of them immeasurably transcend) all I have done, or could do. . . .

'Plenty of songs had been sung — beautiful, matchless songs — adjusted to other lands than these — another spirit and stage of evolution; but I would sing, and leave out or put in, quite solely with reference to America and to-day. Modern science and democracy seem'd to be throwing out their challenge to poetry to put them in its statements in contradistinction to the songs and myths of the past. As I see it now (perhaps too late), I have unwittingly taken up that challenge and made an attempt at such statements — which I certainly would not assume to do now, knowing more clearly what it means. . . .

'Behind all else that can be said, I consider "Leaves of Grass" and its theory experimental — as, in the deepest sense, I consider our American republic itself to be, with its theory. (I think I have at least enough philosophy not to be too absolutely certain of any thing, or any results.) . . .

'I have allow'd the stress of my poems from beginning to end to bear upon American individuality. . . . Defiant of ostensible literary and other conventions, I avowedly chant "the great pride of man in himself," and permit it to be more or less a *motif* of nearly all my verse. I think this pride indispensable to an American. I think it not inconsistent with obedience, humility, deference, and self-questioning. . . .

'Let me not dare, here or anywhere, for my own purposes, or any purposes, to attempt the definition of Poetry, nor answer the question what it is. Like Religion, Love, Nature, while those terms are indispensable, and we all give a sufficiently accurate meaning to them, in my opinion no definition that has ever been made sufficiently encloses the name Poetry; nor can any rule or convention ever so absolutely obtain but some great exception may arise and disregard and overturn it.

'But it is not on "Leaves of Grass" distinctively as *literature*, or a specimen thereof, that I feel to dwell, or advance claims. No one will get at my verses who insists upon viewing them as a literary performance,

## QUICKSAND YEARS

QUICKSAND years that whirl me I know  
not whither,

Your schemes, politics, fail, lines give way,  
substances mock and elude me,

Only the theme I sing, the great and  
strong-possess'd soul, eludes not,

One's-self must never give way — that is  
the final substance — that out of all is  
sure,

Out of politics, triumphs, battles, life, what  
at last finally remains ?

When shows break up what but One's-Self  
is sure ?

1865.

## OTHERS MAY PRAISE WHAT THEY LIKE

OTHERS may praise what they like;

But I, from the banks of the running Mis-  
souri, praise nothing in art or aught  
else,

Till it has well inhaled the atmosphere  
of this river, also the western prairie-  
scent,

And exudes it all again.

1865.

## THICK-SPRINKLED BUNTING<sup>1</sup>

THICK-SPRINKLED bunting ! flag of stars !  
Long yet your road, fateful flag — long yet  
your road, and lined with bloody death,  
For the prize I see at issue at last is the  
world,

All its ships and shores I see interwoven  
with your threads greedy banner;

Dream'd again the flags of kings, highest  
borne, to flaunt unrival'd ?

O hasten flag of man — O with sure and  
steady step, passing highest flags of  
kings,

Walk supreme to the heavens mighty  
symbol — run up above them all,

Flag of stars ! thick-sprinkled bunting !

1865.

or attempt at such performance, or as aiming mainly  
toward art or aestheticism.'

<sup>2</sup> In the original edition both the title and the first  
line read : —

Flag of stars, thick-sprinkled bunting.

BATHED IN WAR'S PERFUME<sup>1</sup>

BATHED in war's perfume — delicate flag !  
 O to hear you call the sailors and the sol-  
 diers ! flag like a beautiful woman !  
 O to hear the tramp, tramp, of a million  
 answering men ! O the ships they arm  
 with joy !  
 O to see you leap and beckon from the tall  
 masts of ships !  
 O to see you peering down on the sailors  
 on the decks !  
 Flag like the eyes of women.

1865.

## O CAPTAIN ! MY CAPTAIN !

O CAPTAIN ! my Captain ! our fearful trip  
 is done,  
 The ship has weather'd every rack, the  
 prize we sought is won,  
 The port is near, the bells I hear, the peo-  
 ple all exulting,  
 While follow eyes the steady keel, the ves-  
 sel grim and daring;  
 But O heart ! heart ! heart !  
 O the bleeding drops of red,<sup>2</sup>  
 Where on the deck my Captain  
 lies,  
 Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain ! my Captain ! rise up and hear  
 the bells;  
 Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for  
 you the bugle trills,  
 For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths —  
 for you the shores a-crowding,  
 For you they call, the swaying mass, their  
 eager faces turning;  
 Here Captain ! dear father !  
 This arm beneath your head !<sup>3</sup>  
 It is some dream that on the  
 deck,  
 You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are  
 pale and still,  
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no  
 pulse nor will,  
 The ship is anchor'd safe and sound,<sup>4</sup> its  
 voyage closed and done,

<sup>1</sup> Omitted from the 1871 and later editions.<sup>2</sup> Leave you not the little spot. (1865.)<sup>3</sup> O Captain ! dear father  
 This arm I push beneath you. (1865.)<sup>4</sup> But the ship, the ship is anchored safe. (1865.)

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in  
 with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells !  
 But I with mournful tread,  
 Walk the deck my Captain lies,<sup>5</sup>  
 Fallen cold and dead.

1865.

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE  
DOORYARD BLOOM'D<sup>6</sup>

WHEN lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,  
 And the great star early droop'd in the  
 western sky in the night,  
 I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-  
 returning spring.

<sup>5</sup> But I with silent tread  
 Walk the spot my Captain lies. (1865.)<sup>6</sup> The most sonorous anthem ever chanted in the  
 church of the world. (SWINBURNE.) See Swinburne's  
 comparison of this poem with Lowell's 'Commemora-  
 tion Ode,' in *Under the Microscope*.— I see the President almost every day, as I happen  
 to live where he passes to or from his lodgings out of  
 town. . . . I see very plainly ABRAHAM LINCOLN's dark  
 brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes, always to  
 me with a deep latent sadness in the expression. We  
 have got so that we exchange bows, and very cordial  
 ones. . . . None of the artists or pictures has caught  
 the deep, though subtle and indirect expression of this  
 man's face. There is something else there. One of the  
 great portrait painters of two or three centuries ago  
 is needed. (WHITMAN, *Specimen Days*, August 12, 1863.  
 Complete Prose Works, p. 37.)I saw him on his return, at three o'clock, after the  
 performance was over. He was in his plain two-horse  
 barouche, and look'd very much worn and tired; the  
 lines, indeed, of vast responsibilities, intricate ques-  
 tions, and demands of life and death, cut deeper than  
 ever upon his dark brown face; yet all the old good-  
 ness, tenderness, sadness, and canny shrewdness, un-  
 derneath the furrows. (I never see that man without  
 feeling that he is one to become personally attach'd to,  
 for his combination of purest, heartiest tenderness, and  
 native western form of manliness.) By his side sat his  
 little boy, of ten years. There were no soldiers. (*Speci-  
 men Days*, March 4, 1865. Prose Works, p. 57.)He leaves for America's history and biography, so  
 far, not only its most dramatic reminiscence — he  
 leaves, in my opinion, the greatest, best, most charac-  
 teristic, artistic, moral personality. Not but that he  
 had faults, and show'd them in the Presidency; but  
 honesty, goodness, shrewdness, conscience, and (a new  
 virtue, unknown to other lands, and hardly yet really  
 known here, but the foundation and tie of all, as the  
 future will grandly develop), Unionism, in its truest  
 and amplest sense, form'd the hard-pan of his charac-  
 ter. These he seal'd with his life. (*Specimen Days*,  
 April 16, 1865. Prose Works, pp. 61, 62.)See also in Whitman's *Collect* 'The Death of Abraham  
 Lincoln.' Complete Prose Works, pp. 308, 309; and 'A  
 Lincoln Reminiscence,' p. 331; also, in *November  
 Boughs*, 'Abraham Lincoln,' Prose Works, pp. 436-438.It is not out of place to add here Lincoln's comment  
 on Whitman. Seeing him walk by the White House,  
 'Mr. Lincoln' (says a witness of the scene, whose let-  
 ter is quoted in Bucke's *Life of Whitman*, p. 42) 'asked

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me  
you bring,  
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star  
in the west,  
And thought of him I love.

2

O powerful western fallen star!  
O shades of night—O moody, tearful  
night!  
O great star disappear'd—O the black  
murk that hides the star!  
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O  
helpless soul of me!  
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not  
free my soul.

3

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house  
near the white-wash'd palings,  
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with  
heart-shaped leaves of rich green,  
With many a pointed blossom rising deli-  
cate, with the perfume strong I love,  
With every leaf a miracle—and from this  
bush in the dooryard,  
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-  
shaped leaves of rich green,  
A sprig with its flower I break.

4

In the swamp in secluded recesses,  
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,  
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding  
the settlements,  
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,  
Death's outlet song of life (for well dear  
brother I know,  
If thou wast not granted to sing thou  
would'st surely die.)

5

Over the breast of the spring, the land,  
amid cities,

who that was, or something of the kind. I spoke up, mentioning the name Walt Whitman, and said he was the author of *Leaves of Grass*. Mr. Lincoln did not say anything, but took a good look, till Whitman was quite gone by. Then he said (I cannot give you his way of saying it, but it was quite emphatic and odd), "Well, he looks like a MAN." He said it pretty loud, but in a sort of absent way, and with the emphasis on the words I have underscored.' This was probably in the winter of 1864-1865.

Amid lanes and through old woods, where  
lately the violets peep'd from the ground,  
spotting the gray débris,  
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the  
lanes, passing the endless grass,  
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every  
grain from its shroud in the dark-brown  
fields uprisen,  
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and  
pink in the orchards,  
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in  
the grave,  
Night and day journeys a coffin.

6

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,  
Through day and night with the great cloud  
darkening the land,  
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with  
the cities draped in black,  
With the show of the States themselves as  
of crape-veil'd women standing,  
With processions long and winding and the  
flambeaus of the night,  
With the countless torches lit, with the si-  
lent sea of faces and the unbared heads,  
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin,  
and the sombre faces,  
With dirges through the night, with the  
thousand voices rising strong and sol-  
emn,  
With all the mournful voices of the dirges  
pour'd around the coffin,  
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering  
organs—where amid these you journey,  
With the tolling tolling bells' perpetual  
clang,  
Here, coffin that slowly passes,  
I give you my sprig of lilac.

7

(Nor for you, for one alone,  
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all  
I bring,  
For fresh as the morning, thus would I  
chant a song for you O sane and sacred  
death.

All over bouquets of roses,  
O death, I cover you over with roses and  
early lilies,  
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms  
the first,  
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from  
the bushes,

With loaded arms I come, pouring for  
you,  
For you and the coffins all of you O  
death.)

## 8

O western orb sailing the heaven,  
Now I know what you must have meant as  
a month since I walk'd,  
As I walk'd in silence the transparent  
shadowy night,  
As I saw you had something to tell as you  
bent to me night after night,  
As you droop'd from the sky low down as  
if to my side (while the other stars all  
look'd on),  
As we wander'd together the solemn night  
(for something I know not what kept me  
from sleep),  
As the night advanced, and I saw on the  
rim of the west how full you were of  
woe,  
As I stood on the rising ground in the  
breeze in the cool transparent night,  
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost  
in the netherward black of the night,  
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank,  
as where you sad orb,  
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

## 9

Sing on there in the swamp,  
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your  
notes, I hear your call,  
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,  
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star  
has detain'd me,  
The star my departing comrade holds and  
detains me.

## 10

O how shall I warble myself for the dead  
one there I loved?  
And how shall I deck my song for the large  
sweet soul that has gone?  
And what shall my perfume be for the grave  
of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,  
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from  
the Western sea, till there on the prairies  
meeting,  
These and with these and the breath of my  
chant,  
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

## 11

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?  
And what shall the pictures be that I hang  
on the walls,  
To adorn the burial-house of him I love? &c

Pictures of growing spring and farms and  
homes,  
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown,  
and the gray smoke lucid and bright,  
With floods of the yellow gold of the gor-  
geous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, ex-  
panding the air,  
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot,  
and the pale green leaves of the trees  
prolific,  
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast  
of the river, with a wind-dapple here and  
there,  
With ranging hills on the banks, with many  
a line against the sky, and shadows,  
And the city at hand with dwellings so  
dense, and stacks of chimneys,  
And all the scenes of life and the workshops,  
and the workmen homeward returning.

## 12

Lo, body and soul — this land,  
My own Manhattan with spires, and the  
sparkling and hurrying tides, and the  
ships,  
The varied and ample land, the South and  
the North in the light, Ohio's shores and  
flashing Missouri,  
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd  
with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and  
haughty,  
The violet and purple morn with just-felt  
breezes,  
The gentle soft-born measureless light,  
The miracle spreading bathing all, the ful-  
fill'd noon,  
The coming eve delicious, the welcome  
night and the stars,  
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man  
and land.

## 13

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,  
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour  
your chant from the bushes,  
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars  
and pines.



Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy  
song,  
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost  
woe.

O liquid and free and tender !  
O wild and loose to my soul — O wondrous  
singer !  
You only I hear — yet the star holds me  
(but will soon depart),  
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

14

Now while I sat in the day and look'd  
forth,  
In the close of the day with its light and  
the fields of spring, and the farmers pre-  
paring their crops,  
In the large unconscious scenery of my land  
with its lakes and forests,  
In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the  
perturb'd winds and the storms),  
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon  
swift passing, and the voices of children  
and women,  
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the  
ships how they sail'd,  
And the summer approaching with richness,  
and the fields all busy with labor,  
And the infinite separate houses, how they  
all went on, each with its meals and  
minutia of daily usages,  
And the streets how their throbbings  
throbb'd, and the cities pent — lo, then  
and there,  
Falling upon them all and among them all,  
enveloping me with the rest,  
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long  
black trail,  
And I knew death, its thought, and the  
sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walk-  
ing one side of me,  
And the thought of death close-walking  
the other side of me,  
And I in the middle as with companions,  
and as holding the hands of compan-  
ions,  
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night  
that talks not,  
Down to the shores of the water, the path  
by the swamp in the dimness,  
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly  
pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd  
me,  
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us  
comrades three,  
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse  
for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,  
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly  
pines so still,  
Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,  
As I held as if by their hands my comrades  
in the night,  
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song  
of the bird.

Come lovely and soothing death,  
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving,  
arriving,  
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,  
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,  
For life and joy, and for objects and know-  
ledge curious,  
And for love, sweet love — but praise ! praise !  
praise !  
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfold-  
ing death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft  
feet,  
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest  
welcome ?  
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above  
all,  
I bring thee a song that when thou must in-  
deed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach strong deliveress,  
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I  
joyously sing the dead,  
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,  
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,  
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adorn-  
ments and feastings for thee,  
And the sights of the open landscape and the  
high-spread sky are fitting,  
And life and the fields, and the huge and  
thoughtful night.



*The night in silence under many a star,  
The ocean shore and the husky whispering  
wave whose voice I know,  
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-  
veil'd death,  
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.*

*Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,  
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the  
myriad fields and the prairies wide, 160  
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teem-  
ing wharves and ways,  
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O  
death.*

15

*To the tally of my soul,  
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown  
bird,  
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling  
the night.*

*Loud in the pines and cedars dim,  
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-  
perfume,  
And I with my comrades there in the night.*

*While my sight that was bound in my eyes  
unclosed,  
As to long panoramas of visions. 170*

*And I saw askant the armies,  
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of  
battle-flags,  
Borne through the smoke of the battles  
and pierc'd with missiles I saw them,  
And carried hither and yon through the  
smoke, and torn and bloody,  
And at last but a few shreds left on the  
staffs (and all in silence),  
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.*

*I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,  
And the white skeletons of young men, I  
saw them,  
I saw the débris and débris of all the slain  
soldiers of the war,  
But I saw they were not as was thought, 180  
They themselves were fully at rest, they  
suffer'd not,  
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother  
suffer'd,  
And the wife and the child and the musing  
comrade suffer'd,  
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.*

16

*Passing the visions, passing the night,  
Passing, unloosing the hold of my com-  
rades' hands,  
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the  
tallying song of my soul,  
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet  
varying ever-altering song,  
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes,  
rising and falling, flooding the night,  
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and  
warning, and yet again bursting with  
joy, 190  
Covering the earth and filling the spread of  
the heaven,  
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard  
from recesses,  
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-  
shaped leaves,  
I leave thee there in the door-yard, bloom-  
ing, returning with spring.*

*I cease from my song for thee,  
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting  
the west, communing with thee,  
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the  
night.*

*Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out  
of the night,  
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-  
brown bird,  
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd  
in my soul, 200  
With the lustrous and drooping star with  
the countenance full of woe,  
With the holders holding my hand nearing  
the call of the bird,  
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and  
their memory ever to keep, for the dead  
I loved so well,  
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days  
and lands — and this for his dear sake,  
Lilac and star and bird twined with the  
chant of my soul,  
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars  
dusk and dim.*

1865.

HUSH'D BE THE CAMPS TO-DAY

MAY 4, 1865

*HUSH'D be the camps to-day,  
And soldiers let us drape our war-worn  
weapons,*

And each with musing soul retire to celebrate,  
Our dear commander's death.

No more for him life's stormy conflicts,  
Nor victory, nor defeat — no more time's dark events,  
Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

But sing poet in our name,  
Sing of the love we bore him — because you, dweller in camps, know it truly.

As they invault the coffin there,  
Sing — as they close the doors of earth upon him — one verse,<sup>1</sup>  
For the heavy hearts of soldiers.

1865.

### OLD WAR-DREAMS<sup>2</sup>

In midnight sleep of many a face of anguish,  
Of the look at first of the mortally wounded  
(of that indescribable look),  
Of the dead on their backs with arms extended wide,  
I dream, I dream, I dream.

Of scenes of Nature, fields and mountains,  
Of skies so beauteous after a storm, and at night the moon so unearthly bright,  
Shining sweetly, shining down, where we dig the trenches and gather the heaps,  
I dream, I dream, I dream.

Long have they pass'd, faces and trenches and fields,  
Where through the carnage I moved with a callous composure, or away from the fallen,  
Onward I sped at the time — but now of their forms at night,  
I dream, I dream, I dream.

1865.

<sup>1</sup> In the original version, 1865, these two lines read : —

Sing, to the lower'd coffin there;  
Sing, with the shovel'd clods that fill the grave — a verse, . . .

The change was made in the edition of 1881.

<sup>2</sup> In the original version, 1865, the first line of the poem read : —

In clouds descending, in midnight sleep, of many a face of anguish,

and the first half of this line was used as title for the poem.

### RECONCILIATION

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky,  
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,  
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;  
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,  
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin — I draw near,  
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

1865.

### AS I LAY WITH MY HEAD IN YOUR LAP CAMERADO

As I lay with my head in your lap camerado,  
The confession I made I resume, what I said to you and the open air I resume,  
I know I am restless and make others so,  
I know my words are weapons full of danger, full of death,<sup>3</sup>  
For I confront peace, security, and all the settled laws, to unsettle them,  
I am more resolute because all have denied me than I could ever have been had all accepted me,  
I heed not and have never heeded either experience, cautions, majorities, nor ridicule,  
And the threat of what is call'd hell is little or nothing to me,  
And the lure of what is call'd heaven is little or nothing to me;  
Dear camerado! I confess I have urged you onward with me, and still urge you, without the least idea what is our destination,  
Or whether we shall be victorious, or utterly quell'd and defeated.

1865.

### ABOARD AT A SHIP'S HELM

ABOARD at a ship's helm,  
A young steersman steering with care.

<sup>3</sup> In the original edition there followed here two lines since omitted : —

(Indeed I am myself the real soldier;  
It is not he, there, with his bayonet, and not the red-striped artilleryman);

Through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ring-  
ing,  
An ocean-bell — O a warning bell, rock'd  
by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by  
the sea-reefs ringing,  
Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its  
wreck-place.

For as on the alert O steersman, you mind  
the loud admonition,  
The bows turn, the freighted ship tacking  
speeds away under her gray sails,  
The beautiful and noble ship with all her  
precious wealth speeds away gayly and  
safe.

But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship  
aboard the ship!  
Ship of the body, ship of the soul, voyaging,  
voyaging, voyaging.

1867.

NOT THE PILOT<sup>1</sup>

NOT the pilot has charged himself to bring  
his ship into port, though beaten back  
and many times baffled;  
Not the pathfinder penetrating inland weary  
and long,  
By deserts parch'd, snows chill'd, rivers  
wet, perseveres till he reaches his desti-  
nation,  
More than I have charged myself, heeded  
or unheeded, to compose a march for  
these States,  
For a battle-call, rousing to arms if need  
be, years, centuries hence.

1867.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, in the Complete Prose Works, pp. 197-260; especially pp. 199, 200, 202, 203:—

Our fundamental want to-day in the United States, with closest, amplest reference to present conditions, and to the future, is of a class, and the clear idea of a class, of native authors, . . . fit to cope with our occasions, lands, permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into it a new breath of life, giving it decision. . . . For, I say, the true nationality of the States, the genuine union, when we come to a moral crisis, is, and is to be, after all, neither the written law nor, (as is generally supposed), either self-interest, or common pecuniary or material objects — but the fervid and tremendous Idea, melting everything else with resistless heat, and solving all lesser and definite distinctions in vast, indefinite, spiritual, emotional power.

ONE'S-SELF I SING<sup>2</sup>

ONE'S-SELF I sing, a simple separate per-  
son,  
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word  
En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,  
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is  
worthy for the Muse — I say the Form  
complete is worthier far,  
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and  
power,  
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under  
the laws divine,  
The Modern Man I sing.

1867, 1871.

## TEARS

TEARS! tears! tears!  
In the night, in solitude, tears,  
On the white shore dripping, dripping,  
suck'd in by the sand,  
Tears, not a star shining, all dark and  
desolate,  
Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled  
head;  
O who is that ghost? that form in the  
dark, with tears?  
What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd  
there on the sand?  
Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes,  
choked with wild cries;  
O storm, embodied, rising, careering with  
swift steps along the beach!

<sup>2</sup> This poem is now placed first in the standard editions of Whitman's Poems. In its original form, as the Inscription of the 1867 edition, it read:—

SMALL is the theme of the following Chant, yet the greatest — namely, ONE'S-SELF — that wondrous thing, a simple, separate person. That, for the use of the New World, I sing.

Man's physiology complete, from top to toe, I sing. Not physiognomy alone, nor brain alone, is worthy for the muse; — I say the Form complete is worthier far. The female equally with the male, I sing.

Nor cease at the theme of One's-Self. I speak the word of the modern, the word EN-MASSE.

My Days I sing, and the Lands — with interstice I knew of hapless War.

O friend, whoe'er you are, at last arriving hither to commence, I feel through every leaf the pressure of your hand, which I return. And thus upon our journey link'd together let us go.

This version, in a slightly revised form, beginning 'Small the theme of my chant,' is now printed as a separate poem in the final edition of *Leaves of Grass*, p. 397.

O wild and dismal night storm, with wind  
 — O belching and desperate !  
 O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with  
 calm countenance and regulated pace,  
 But away at night as you fly, none looking  
 — O then the unloosen'd ocean,  
 Of tears ! tears ! tears !

1867.

### WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH

WHISPERS of heavenly death murmur'd I  
 hear,  
 Labial gossip of night, sibilant chorals,  
 Footsteps gently ascending, mystical  
 breezes wafted soft and low,  
 Ripples of unseen rivers, tides of a current  
 flowing, forever flowing,  
 (Or is it the plashing of tears ? the mea-  
 sureless waters of human tears ? )  
 I see, just see skyward, great cloud-masses,  
 Mournfully slowly they roll, silently swell-  
 ing and mixing,  
 With at times a half-dimm'd sadden'd far-  
 off star,  
 Appearing and disappearing.

(Some parturition rather, some solemn im-  
 mortal birth;  
 On the frontiers to eyes impenetrable,  
 Some soul is passing over.)

1868. (1871.)

### THE SINGER IN THE PRISON

I

*O sight of pity, shame and dole !<sup>1</sup>  
 O fearful thought — a convict soul.*

RANG the refrain along the hall, the prison,  
 Rose to the roof, the vaults of heaven above,  
 Pouring in floods of melody in tones so pen-  
 sive sweet and strong the like whereof was  
 never heard,  
 Reaching the far-off sentry and the armed  
 guards, who ceas'd their pacing,  
 Making the hearer's pulses stop for ecstasy  
 and awe.

2 2

The sun was low in the west one winter day,  
 When down a narrow aisle amid the thieves  
 and outlaws of the land,

<sup>1</sup> *O sight of shame, and pain, and dole !* (1868, 1871.)

<sup>2</sup> In the early editions this section begins : —

*O sight of pity, gloom, and dole !  
 O pardon me, a hapless Soul !*

(There by the hundreds seated, sear-faced  
 murderers, wily counterfeiter,  
 Gather'd to Sunday church in prison walls,  
 the keepers round,  
 Plenteous, well-armed, watching with vigi-  
 lant eyes,)  
 Calmly a lady walk'd holding a little inno-  
 cent child by either hand,  
 Whom seating on their stools beside her on  
 the platform,  
 She, first preluding with the instrument a  
 low and musical prelude,  
 In voice surpassing all, sang forth a quaint  
 old hymn.

A soul confined by bars and bands,<sup>3</sup>  
 Cries, help ! O help ! and wrings her hands,  
 Blinded her eyes, bleeding her breast,  
 Nor pardon finds, nor balm of rest.

Ceaseless she paces to and fro,  
 O heart-sick days ! O nights of woe !  
 Nor hand of friend, nor loving face,  
 Nor favor comes, nor word of grace.

It was not I that sinn'd the sin,  
 The ruthless body dragg'd me in;  
 Though long I strove courageously,  
 The body was too much for me.

Dear prison'd soul bear up a space,  
 For soon or late the certain grace;  
 To set thee free and bear thee home,  
 The heavenly pardoner death shall come.

*Convict no more, nor shame, nor dole !  
 Depart — a God-enfranchis'd soul !*

3

The singer ceas'd,  
 One glance swept from her clear calm eyes  
 o'er all those upturn'd faces,  
 Strange sea of prison faces, a thousand va-  
 ried, crafty, brutal, seam'd and beauteous  
 faces,  
 Then rising, passing back along the narrow  
 aisle between them,  
 While her gown touch'd them rustling in  
 the silence,  
 She vanish'd with her children in the dusk.

<sup>3</sup> In the early editions these stanzas have a sub-title  
 'The Hymn,' and each stanza is followed by a refrain  
 in italics : after the first stanza, the same as at the be-  
 ginning of Section 1 ; after the second stanza, the same  
 as at the beginning of Section 2 ; after the third stanza

*O life ! no life, but bitter dole !  
 O burning, beaten, baffled Soul !*

While upon all, convicts and armed keepers  
ere they stirr'd<sup>41</sup>  
(Convict forgetting prison, keeper his  
loaded pistol),  
A hush and pause fell down a wondrous  
minute,  
With deep half-stifled sobs and sound of  
bad men bow'd and moved to weeping,  
And youth's convulsive breathings, memo-  
ries of home,  
The mother's voice in lullaby, the sister's  
care, the happy childhood,  
The long-pent spirit rous'd to reminiscence;  
A wondrous minute then — but after in the  
solitary night, to many, many there,  
Years after, even in the hour of death, the  
sad refrain, the tune, the voice, the words,  
Resumed, the large calm lady walks the  
narrow aisle,  
The wailing melody again, the singer in the<sup>50</sup>  
prison sings,

*O sight of pity, shame and dole! <sup>1</sup>  
O fearful thought — a convict soul.*

1869. (1871.)

### ETHIOPIA SALUTING THE COLORS

Who are you dusky woman, so ancient  
hardly human,  
With your woolly-white and turban'd head,  
and bare bony feet?  
Why rising by the roadside here, do you  
the colors greet?

(T is while our army lines Carolina's sands  
and pines,  
Forth from thy hovel door thou Ethiopia  
com'st to me,  
As under doughty Sherman I march to-  
ward the sea.)

*Me master years a hundred since from my  
parents sunder'd,  
A little child, they caught me as the savage  
beast is caught,  
Then hither me across the sea the cruel slaver  
brought.*

No further does she say, but lingering all  
the day,

<sup>1</sup> The early editions have the same variant reading  
here as in the first line.

Her high-borne turban'd head she wags,  
and rolls her darkling eye,  
And courtesies to the regiments, the guid-  
ons moving by.

What is it fateful woman, so blear, hardly  
human?  
Why wag your head with turban bound,  
yellow, red and green?  
Are the things so strange and marvelous  
you see or have seen?

1871.

### DELICATE CLUSTER

DELICATE cluster! flag of teeming life!  
Covering all my lands — all my seashores  
lining!  
Flag of death! (how I watch'd you through  
the smoke of battle pressing!  
How I heard you flap and rustle, cloth  
defiant!)  
Flag cerulean — sunny flag, with the orbs  
of night dappled!  
Ah my silvery beauty — ah my woolly  
white and crimson!  
Ah to sing the song of you, my matron  
mighty!  
My sacred one, my mother.

1871.

### THE BASE OF ALL META- PHYSICS

AND now gentlemen,  
A word I give to remain in your memories  
and minds,  
As base and finale too for all metaphysics.

(So to the students the old professor,  
At the close of his crowded course.)

Having studied the new and antique, the  
Greek and Germanic systems,  
Kant having studied and stated, Fichte and  
Schelling and Hegel,  
Stated the lore of Plato, and Socrates  
greater than Plato,  
And greater than Socrates sought and  
stated, Christ divine having studied long,  
I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and  
Germanic systems,  
See the philosophies all, Christian churches  
and tenets see,

Yet underneath Socrates clearly see, and  
underneath Christ the divine I see,  
The dear love of man for his comrade, the  
attraction of friend to friend,  
Of the well-married husband and wife, of  
children and parents,  
Of city for city and land for land.

1871.

## ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT

On the beach at night,  
Stands a child with her father,  
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness,  
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in  
black masses spreading,  
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down  
the sky,  
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet  
left in the east,  
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,  
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,  
Swim the delicate sisters the Pleiades. 10

From the beach the child holding the hand  
of her father,  
Those burial-clouds that lower victorious  
soon to devour all,  
Watching, silently weeps.

Weep not, child,  
Weep not, my darling,  
With these kisses let me remove your tears,  
The ravening clouds shall not long be vic-  
torious,  
They shall not long possess the sky, they  
devour the stars only in apparition,  
Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch  
again another night, the Pleiades shall  
emerge,  
They are immortal, all those stars both  
silvery and golden shall shine out again,  
The great stars and the little ones shall  
shine out again, they endure, 21  
The vast immortal suns and the long-  
enduring pensive moons shall again shine.

Then dearest child mournest thou only for  
Jupiter?  
Considerest thou alone the burial of the  
stars?

Something there is,  
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I  
whisper,  
I give thee the first suggestion, the prob-  
lem and indirection,)  
Something there is more immortal even  
than the stars,  
(Many the burials, many the days and  
nights, passing away,)  
Something that shall endure longer even  
than lustrous Jupiter,  
Longer than sun or any revolving satellite.  
Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.

1871.

## A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

A NOISELESS patient spider,  
I mark'd where on a little promontory it  
stood isolated,  
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast sur-  
rounding,  
It launch'd forth filament, filament, fila-  
ment, out of itself,  
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speed-  
ing them.

And you O my soul where you stand,  
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans  
of space,  
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,  
seeking the spheres to connect them,  
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till  
the ductile anchor hold,  
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch  
somewhere, O my soul.

1871.

PASSAGE TO INDIA<sup>1</sup>

1

SINGING my days,  
Singing the great achievements of the pre-  
sent,

<sup>1</sup> Compare the passage from Whitman's Prose Work quoted in a note at the end of 'A Broadway Pageant,' and also, especially (among many other passages), *Specimen Days*, July 22 and 23, 1878, *Complete Prose Works*, pp. 111, 112; and the following paragraphs from the note on 'Passage to India' in the Preface of the 1876 edition (*Complete Prose Works*, pp. 272-274): —

I am not sure but the last inclosing sublimation of race or poem is, what it thinks of death. After the rest has been comprehended and said, even the grandest — after those contributions to mightiest nationality, or to

Singing the strong light works of engineers,  
 Our modern wonders (the antique ponderous Seven outvied),  
 In the Old World the east the Suez canal,  
 The New by its mighty railroad spann'd,  
 The seas inlaid with eloquent gentle wires;  
 Yet first to sound, and ever sound, the cry  
 with thee O soul,  
 The Past! the Past! the Past!

The Past — the dark unfathom'd retrospect!  
 The teeming gulf — the sleepers and the shadows!  
 The past — the infinite greatness of the past!  
 For what is the present after all but a growth out of the past?  
 (As a projectile form'd, impell'd, passing a certain line, still keeps on,  
 So the present, utterly form'd, impell'd by the past.)

## 2

Passage O soul to India!  
 Eclaircise the myths Asiatic, the primitive fables.

sweetest song, or to the best personalism, male or female, have been glean'd from the rich and varied themes of tangible life, and have been fully accepted and sung, and the pervading fact of visible existence, with the duty it devolves, is rounded and apparently completed, it still remains to be really completed by suffusing through the whole and several, that other pervading invisible fact, so large a part (is it not the largest part?) of life here, combining the rest, and furnishing, for person or State, the only permanent and unitary meaning to all, even the meanest life, consistently with the dignity of the universe, in Time. As from the eligibility to this thought, and the cheerful conquest of this fact, flash forth the first distinctive proofs of the soul, so to me (extending it only a little further), the ultimate Democratic purports, the ethereal and spiritual ones, are to concentrate here, and as fixed stars, radiate hence. For, in my opinion, it is no less than this idea of immortality, above all other ideas, that is to enter into, and vivify, and give crowning religious stamp, to democracy in the New World.

[Here follows the paragraph already quoted at the end of note 1 on p. 548; then, after speaking of his own paralysis and his mother's death, Whitman concludes:—]

Under these influences, therefore, I still feel to keep 'Passage to India' for last words. . . . Not as, in antiquity, at highest festival of Egypt, the noisome skeleton of death was sent on exhibition to the revelers, for zest and shadow to the occasion's joy and light — but as the marble statue of the normal Greeks at Elis, suggesting death in the form of a beautiful and perfect young man, with closed eyes, leaning on an inverted torch — emblem of rest and aspiration after action — of crown and point which all lives and poems should steadily have reference to, namely, the justified and noble termination of our identity, this grade of it, and outlet-preparation to another grade.

Not you alone proud truths of the world,  
 Not you alone ye facts of modern science,  
 But myths and fables of eld, Asia's, Africa's fables,  
 The far-darting beams of the spirit, the unloos'd dreams,  
 The deep diving bibles and legends,  
 The daring plots of the poets, the elder religions;  
 O you temples fairer than lilies pour'd over by the rising sun!  
 O you fables spurning the known, eluding the hold of the known, mounting to heaven!  
 You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as roses, burnish'd with gold!  
 Towers of fables immortal fashion'd from mortal dreams!  
 You too I welcome and fully the same as the rest!  
 You too with joy I sing.

Passage to India!  
 Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?  
 The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,  
 The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,  
 The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,  
 The lands to be welded together.

A worship new I sing,  
 You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours,  
 You engineers, you architects, machinists, yours,  
 You, not for trade or transportation only,  
 But in God's name, and for thy sake O soul.

## 3

Passage to India!  
 Lo soul for thee of tableaux twain,  
 I see in one the Suez canal initiated, open'd,  
 I see the procession of steamships, the Empress Eugenie's leading the van,  
 I mark from on deck the strange landscape, the pure sky, the level sand in the distance,  
 I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen gather'd,  
 The gigantic dredging machines.

<sup>1</sup> Here follows, in the original edition, the line: —  
 The people to become brothers and sisters.



In one again, different (yet thine, all thine,  
 O soul, the same),  
 I see over my own continent the Pacific  
 railroad surmounting every barrier,  
 I see continual trains of cars winding along  
 the Platte carrying freight and pas-  
 sengers, 50  
 I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring,  
 and the shrill steam-whistle,  
 I hear the echoes reverberate through the  
 grandest scenery in the world,  
 I cross the Laramie plains, I note the rocks  
 in grotesque shapes, the buttes,  
 I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions,  
 the barren, colorless, sage-deserts,  
 I see in glimpses afar or towering imme-  
 diately above me the great mountains,  
 I see the Wind river and the Wahsatch  
 mountains,  
 I see the Monument mountain and the  
 Eagle's Nest, I pass the Promontory, I  
 ascend the Nevadas,  
 I scan the noble Elk mountain and wind  
 around its base,  
 I see the Humboldt range, I thread the  
 valley and cross the river,  
 I see the clear waters of lake Tahoe, I see  
 forests of majestic pines,  
 Or crossing the great desert, the alkaline  
 plains, I behold enchanting mirages of  
 waters and meadows, 60  
 Marking through these and after all, in  
 duplicate slender lines,  
 Bridging the three or four thousand miles  
 of land travel,  
 Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,  
 The road between Europe and Asia.

(Ah Genoese thy dream ! thy dream !  
 Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,  
 The shore thou foundest verifies thy  
 dream.)

4

Passage to India !  
 Struggles of many a captain, tales of many  
 a sailor dead,  
 Over my mood stealing and spreading they  
 come, 70  
 Like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach'd  
 sky.

Along all history, down the slopes,  
 As a rivulet running, sinking now, and now  
 again to the surface rising,

A ceaseless thought, a varied train — lo,  
 soul, to thee, thy sight, they rise,  
 The plans, the voyages again, the expedi-  
 tions;  
 Again Vasco de Gama sails forth,  
 Again the knowledge gain'd, the mariner's  
 compass,  
 Lands found and nations born, thou born  
 America,  
 For purpose vast, man's long probation  
 fill'd,  
 Thou rondure of the world at last accom-  
 plish'd. 80

5

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,  
 Cover'd all over with visible power and  
 beauty,  
 Alternate light and day and the teeming  
 spiritual darkness,  
 Unspeakable high processions of sun and  
 moon and countless stars above,  
 Below, the manifold grass and waters, ani-  
 mals, mountains, trees,  
 With inscrutable purpose, some hidden  
 prophetic intention,  
 Now first it seems my thought begins to  
 span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending  
 radiating,  
 Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad  
 progeny after them,  
 Wandering, yearning, curious, with restless  
 explorations, 90  
 With questionings, baffled, formless, fever-  
 ish, with never-happy hearts,  
 With that sad incessant refrain, *Wherefore*  
*unsatisfied soul?* and *Whither O mocking*  
*life?*

Ah who shall soothe these feverish chil-  
 dren ?

Who justify these restless explorations ?  
 Who speak the secret of impassive earth ?  
 Who bind it to us ? what is this separate  
 Nature so unnatural ?  
 What is this earth to our affections ? (un-  
 loving earth, without a throb to answer  
 ours,  
 Cold earth, the place of graves.)

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains,  
 and shall be carried out,  
 Perhaps even now the time has arrived. 100

After the seas are all cross'd (as they seem  
already cross'd),  
After the great captains and engineers  
have accomplish'd their work,  
After the noble inventors, after the scien-  
tists, the chemist, the geologist, ethnolo-  
gist,  
Finally shall come the poet worthy that  
name,  
The true son of God shall come singing his  
songs.

Then not your deeds only O voyagers, O  
scientists and inventors, shall be justified,  
All these hearts as of fretted children shall  
be sooth'd,  
All affection shall be fully responded to,  
the secret shall be told,  
All these separations and gaps shall be taken  
up and hook'd and link'd together,  
The whole earth, this cold, impassive, voice-  
less earth, shall be completely justi-  
fied,  
Trinitas divine shall be gloriously accom-  
plish'd and compacted by the true son of  
God, the poet,  
(He shall indeed pass the straits and con-  
quer the mountains,  
He shall double the cape of Good Hope to  
some purpose,)  
Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and dif-  
fused no more,  
The true son of God shall absolutely fuse  
them.

## 6

Year at whose wide-flung door I sing !  
Year of the purpose accomplish'd!  
Year of the marriage of continents, climates  
and oceans !  
(No mere doge of Venice now wedding the  
Adriatic,)  
I see O year in you the vast terraqueous  
globe given and giving all,  
Europe to Asia, Africa join'd, and they to  
the New World,  
The lands, geographies, dancing before you,  
holding a festival garland,  
As brides and bridegrooms hand in hand.

Passage to India !  
Cooling airs from Caucasus far, soothing  
cradle of man,  
The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up  
again.

Lo soul, the retrospect brought forward,  
The old, most populous, wealthiest of  
earth's lands,  
The streams of the Indus and the Ganges  
and their many affluents,  
(I my shores of America walking to-day  
behold, resuming all,)  
The tale of Alexander on his warlike  
marches suddenly dying,  
On one side China and on the other side  
Persia and Arabia,  
To the south the great seas and the bay of  
Bengal,  
The flowing literatures, tremendous epics,  
religions, castes,  
Old occult Brahma interminably far back,  
the tender and junior Buddha,  
Central and southern empires and all their  
belongings, possessors,  
The wars of Tamerlane, the reign of Au-  
runglebe,  
The traders, rulers, explorers, Moslems,  
Venetians, Byzantium, the Arabs, Portu-  
guese,  
The first travelers famous yet, Marco Polo,  
Batouta the Moor,  
Doubts to be solv'd, the map incognita,  
blanks to be fill'd,  
The foot of man unstay'd, the hands never  
at rest,  
Thyself O soul that will not brook a chal-  
lenge.

The mediæval navigators rise before me,  
The world of 1492, with its awaken'd enter-  
prise,  
Something swelling in humanity now like  
the sap of the earth in spring,  
The sunset splendor of chivalry declin-  
ing.

And who art thou sad shade ?  
Gigantic, visionary, thyself a visionary,  
With majestic limbs and pious beaming  
eyes,  
Spreading around with every look of thine  
a golden world,  
Enhuing it with gorgeous hues.

As the chief histrion  
Down to the footlights walks in some great  
scena,  
Dominating the rest I see the Admiral him-  
self,  
(History's type of courage, action, faith,)

Behold him sail from Palos leading his  
little fleet,  
His voyage behold, his return, his great  
fame,  
His misfortunes, calumniators, behold him  
a prisoner, chain'd,  
Behold his dejection, poverty, death.

(Curious in time I stand, noting the efforts  
of heroes, <sup>160</sup>  
Is the deferment long? bitter the slander,  
poverty, death?  
Lies the seed unreck'd for centuries in the  
ground? lo, to God's due occasion,  
Uprising in the night, it sprouts, blooms,  
And fills the earth with use and beauty.)

## 7

Passage indeed O soul to primal thought,  
Not lands and seas alone, thy own clear  
freshness,  
The young maturity of brood and bloom,  
To realms of budding bibles.

O soul, repressless, I with thee and thou  
with me,  
Thy circumnavigation of the world begin, <sup>170</sup>  
Of man, the voyage of his mind's return,  
To reason's early paradise,  
Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent  
intuitions,  
Again with fair creation.

## 8

O we can wait no longer,  
We too take ship O soul,  
Joyous we too launch out on trackless  
seas,  
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of  
ecstasy to sail,  
Amid the wafting winds (thou pressing me  
to thee, I thee to me, O soul),  
Caroling free, singing our song of God, <sup>180</sup>  
Chanting our chant of pleasant explora-  
tion.

With laugh and many a kiss  
(Let others deprecate, let others weep for  
sin, remorse, humiliation),  
O soul thou pleasest me, I thee.

Ah more than any priest O soul we too  
believe in God,  
But with the mystery of God we dare not  
dally.

O soul thou pleasest me, I thee,  
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking  
in the night,  
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and  
Space and Death, like waters flowing,  
Bear me indeed as through the regions in-  
finite, <sup>190</sup>  
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples bear,  
lave me all over,  
Bathe me O God in thee, mounting to thee,  
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O Thou transcendent,  
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,  
Light of the light, shedding forth universes,  
thou centre of them,  
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good,  
the loving,  
Thou moral, spiritual fountain — affection's  
source — thou reservoir,  
(O pensive soul of me — O thirst unsatis-  
fied — waitest not there?  
Waitest not haply for us somewhere there  
the Comrade perfect?) <sup>200</sup>  
Thou pulse — thou motive of the stars,  
suns, systems,  
That, circling, move in order, safe, harmo-  
nious,  
Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space,  
How should I think, how breathe a single  
breath, how speak, if, out of myself,  
I could not launch, to those, superior uni-  
verses?

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,  
At Nature and its wonders, Time and  
Space and Death,  
But that I, turning, call to thee O soul,  
thou actual Me,  
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,  
Thou matest Time, amilest content at Death,  
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of  
Space. <sup>211</sup>

Greater than stars or suns,  
Bounding O soul thou journeyest forth;  
What love than thine and ours could wider  
amplify?  
What aspirations, wishes, outvie thine and  
ours O soul?  
What dreams of the ideal? what plans of  
purity, perfection, strength?  
What cheerful willingness for others' sake  
to give up all?  
For others' sake to suffer all?

Reckoning ahead O soul, when thou, the  
time achiev'd,  
The seas all cross'd, weather'd the capes,  
the voyage done, 220  
Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest,  
the aim attain'd,  
As fill'd with friendship, love complete, the  
Elder Brother found,  
The Younger melts in fondness in his  
arms.

9

Passage to more than India !  
Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far  
flights ?

O soul, voyagest thou indeed on voyages  
like those ?

Disportest thou on waters such as those ?  
Soundest below the Sanscrit and the Vedas ?  
Then have thy bent unleash'd.

Passage to you, your shores, ye aged fierce  
enigmas ! 230

Passage to you, to mastership of you, ye  
strangling problems !

You, strew'd with the wrecks of skeletons,  
that, living, never reach'd you.

Passage to more than India !  
O secret of the earth and sky !  
Of you O waters of the sea ! O winding  
creeks and rivers !

Of you O woods and fields ! of you strong  
mountains of my land !

Of you O prairies ! of you gray rocks !  
O morning red ! O clouds ! O rain and  
snows !

O day and night, passage to you !

O sun and moon and all you stars ! Sirius  
and Jupiter ! 240  
Passage to you !

Passage, immediate passage ! the blood  
burns in my veins !

Away O soul ! hoist instantly the an-  
chor !

Cut the hawsers — haul out — shake out  
every sail !

Have we not stood here like trees in the  
ground long enough ?

Have we not grovel'd here long enough,  
eating and drinking like mere brutes ?

Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves  
with books long enough ?

Sail forth — steer for the deep waters only,  
Reckless O soul, exploring, I with thee,  
and thou with me,  
For we are bound where mariner has not  
yet dared to go, 250  
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul !

O farther farther sail !

O daring joy, but safe ! are they not all the  
seas of God ?

O farther, farther, farther sail !

1871.

### DAREST THOU NOW O SOUL

DAREST thou now O soul,  
Walk out with me toward the unknown  
region,  
Where neither ground is for the feet nor  
any path to follow ?

No map there, nor guide,  
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human  
hand,  
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor  
eyes, are in that land.

I know it not O soul,  
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,  
All waits undream'd of in that region, that  
inaccessible land.

Till when the ties loosen,  
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,  
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any  
bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,  
In Time and Space O soul, prepared for  
them,  
Equal, equipt at last (O joy ! O fruit of  
all !) them to fulfil O soul.

1871.

### THE LAST INVOCATION

At the last, tenderly,  
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd  
house,  
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from  
the keep of the well-closed doors,  
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth;  
With the key of softness unlock the locks  
— with a whisper,  
Set ope the doors O soul.

Tenderly — be not impatient,  
(Strong is your hold O mortal flesh,  
Strong is your hold O love.)

1871.

### JOY, SHIPMATE, JOY!

Joy, shipmate, joy!  
(Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,)  
Our life is closed, our life begins,  
The long, long anchorage we leave,  
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!  
She swiftly courses from the shore,  
Joy, shipmate, joy.

1871.

### O STAR OF FRANCE<sup>1</sup>

1870-71

O STAR of France,  
The brightness of thy hope and strength  
and fame,  
Like some proud ship that led the fleet so  
long,  
Beseems to-day a wreck driven by the  
gale, a mastless hulk,  
And 'mid its teeming madden'd half-  
drown'd crowds,  
Nor helm nor helmsman.

Dim smitten star,  
Orb not of France alone, pale symbol of my  
soul, its dearest hopes,  
The struggle and the daring, rage divine  
for liberty,  
Of aspirations toward the far ideal, enthu-  
siast's dreams of brotherhood,  
Of terror to the tyrant and the priest.

Star crucified — by traitors sold,  
Star panting o'er a land of death, heroic  
land,  
Strange, passionate, mocking, frivolous land.

Miserable! yet for thy errors, vanities,  
sins, I will not now rebuke thee,

<sup>1</sup> Compare Whitman's *Specimen Days*, April 18, 1881.  
Complete Prose Works, p. 174.

Thy unexampled woes and pangs have  
quell'd them all,  
And left thee sacred.

In that amid thy many faults thou ever  
aimedst highly,  
In that thou wouldst not really sell thyself  
however great the price,  
In that thou surely wakedst weeping  
from thy drugg'd sleep,  
In that alone among thy sisters thou,  
giantess, didst rend the ones that shamed  
thee,  
In that thou couldst not, wouldst not, wear  
the usual chains,  
This cross, thy livid face, thy pierced hands  
and feet,  
The spear thrust in thy side.

O star! O ship of France, beat back and  
baffled long!  
Bear up O smitten orb! O ship continue  
on!

Sure as the ship of all, the Earth itself,  
Product of deathly fire and turbulent  
chaos,  
Forth from its spasms of fury and its  
poisons,  
Issuing at last in perfect power and beauty,  
Onward beneath the sun following its  
course,  
So thee O ship of France!

Finish'd the days, the clouds dispel'd,  
The travail o'er, the long-sought extrica-  
tion,  
When lo! reborn, high o'er the European  
world,  
(In gladness answering thence, as face afar  
to face, reflecting ours Columbia,)  
Again thy star O France, fair lustrous star,  
In heavenly peace, clearer, more bright  
than ever,  
Shall beam immortal.

1871. (1872.)

### THE MYSTIC TRUMPETER

I

HARK, some wild trumpeter, some strange  
musician,  
Hovering unseen in air, vibrates capricious  
tunes to-night.

**I** hear thee trumpeter, listening alert I  
 catch thy notes,  
**N**ow pouring, whirling like a tempest round  
 me,  
**N**ow low, subdued, now in the distance lost.

2

**C**ome nearer bodiless one, haply in thee  
 resounds  
**S**ome dead composer, haply thy pensive life  
**W**as fill'd with aspirations high, uniform'd  
 ideals,  
**W**aves, oceans musical, chaotically surging,  
**T**hat now ecstatic ghost, close to me bend-  
 ing, thy cornet echoing, pealing,  
**G**ives out to no one's ears but mine, but  
 freely gives to mine,  
**T**hat I may thee translate.

3

**B**low trumpeter free and clear, I follow  
 thee,  
**W**hile at thy liquid prelude, glad, serene,  
**T**he fretting world, the streets, the noisy  
 hours of day withdraw,  
**A** holy calm descends like dew upon me,  
**I** walk in cool refreshing night the walks of  
 Paradise,  
**I** scent the grass, the moist air and the roses;  
**T**hy song expands my numb'd imbonded  
 spirit, thou freest, launchest me,  
**F**loating and basking upon heaven's lake. 20

4

**B**low again trumpeter! and for my sensu-  
 ous eyes,  
**B**ring the old pageants, show the feudal  
 world.

**W**hat charm thy music works! thou makest  
 pass before me,  
**L**adies and cavaliers long dead, barons are  
 in their castle halls, the troubadours are  
 singing,  
**A**rm'd knights go forth to redress wrongs,  
 some in quest of the holy Graal;  
**I** see the tournament, I see the contestants  
 incased in heavy armor seated on stately  
 champing horses,  
**I** hear the shouts, the sounds of blows and  
 smiting steel;  
**I** see the Crusaders' tumultuous armies —  
 hark, how the cymbals clang,  
**L**o, where the monks walk in advance,  
 bearing the cross on high.

5

**B**low again trumpeter! and for thy theme,  
**T**ake now the enclosing theme of all, the  
 solvent and the setting,  
**L**ove, that is pulse of all, the sustenance  
 and the pang,  
**T**he heart of man and woman all for love,  
**N**o other theme but love — knitting, enclos-  
 ing, all-diffusing love.

**O** how the immortal phantoms crowd  
 around me!  
**I** see the vast alembic ever working, I  
 see and know the flames that heat the  
 world,  
**T**he glow, the blush, the beating hearts of  
 lovers,  
**S**o blissful happy some, and some so silent,  
 dark, and nigh to death;  
**L**ove, that is all the earth to lovers — love,  
 that mocks time and space,  
**L**ove, that is day and night — love, that is  
 sun and moon and stars,  
**L**ove, that is crimson, sumptuous, sick with  
 perfume,  
**N**o other words but words of love, no other  
 thought but love.

6

**B**low again trumpeter — conjure war's  
 alarums.

**S**wift to thy spell a shuddering hum like  
 distant thunder rolls,  
**L**o, where the arm'd men hasten — lo, 'mid  
 the clouds of dust the glint of bayonets,  
**I** see the grime-faced cannoneers, I mark the  
 rosy flash amid the smoke, I hear the  
 cracking of the guns;  
**N**or war alone — thy fearful music-song,  
 wild player, brings every sight of fear,  
**T**he deeds of ruthless brigands, rapine,  
 murder — I hear the cries for help!  
**I** see ships foundering at sea, I behold on  
 deck and below deck the terrible tableaux.

7

**O** trumpeter, methinks I am myself the  
 instrument thou playest,  
**T**hou melt'st my heart, my brain — thou  
 movest, drawest, changest them at will;  
**A**nd now thy sullen notes send darkness  
 through me,  
**T**hou takest away all cheering light, all  
 hope,

I see the enslaved, the overthrown, the hurt,  
 the opprest of the whole earth,  
 I feel the measureless shame and humilia-  
 tion of my race, it becomes all mine,  
 Mine too the revenges of humanity, the  
 wrongs of ages, baffled feuds and hatreds,  
 Utter defeat upon me weighs — all lost —  
 the foe victorious,  
 (Yet 'mid the ruins Pride colossal stands  
 unshaken to the last,  
 Endurance, resolution to the last.)

8

Now trumpeter for thy close, 60  
 Vouchsafe a higher strain than any yet,  
 Sing to my soul, renew its languishing faith  
 and hope,  
 Rouse up my slow belief, give me some  
 vision of the future,  
 Give me for once its prophecy and joy.

O glad, exulting, culminating song!  
 A vigor more than earth's is in thy notes,  
 Marches of victory — man disenthral'd —  
 the conqueror at last,  
 Hymns to the universal God from universal  
 man — all joy!  
 A reborn race appears — a perfect world,  
 all joy!  
 Women and men in wisdom innocence and  
 health — all joy! 70  
 Riotous laughing bacchanals fill'd with joy!  
 War, sorrow, suffering gone — the rank  
 earth purged — nothing but joy left!  
 The ocean fill'd with joy — the atmosphere  
 all joy!  
 Joy! joy! in freedom, worship, love! joy  
 in the ecstasy of life!  
 Enough to merely be! enough to breathe!  
 Joy! joy! all over joy!

1872.

### VIRGINIA — THE WEST

THE noble sire fallen on evil days,  
 I saw with hand uplifted, menacing, bran-  
 dishing  
 (Memories of old in abeyance, love and  
 faith in abeyance),  
 The insane knife toward the Mother of All.

The noble son on sinewy feet advancing,  
 I saw, out of the land of prairies, land of  
 Ohio's waters and of Indiana,

To the rescue the stalwart giant hurry his  
 plenteous offspring,  
 Drest in blue, bearing their trusty rifles on  
 their shoulders.

Then the Mother of All with calm voice  
 speaking,  
 As to you Rebellious (I seemed to hear her  
 say), why strive against me, and why seek  
 my life?

When you yourself forever provide to de-  
 fend me?

For you provided me Washington — and  
 now these also.

1872.

### THOU MOTHER WITH THY EQUAL BROOD<sup>1</sup>

I

THOU Mother with thy equal brood,  
 Thou varied chain of different States, yet  
 one identity only,

<sup>1</sup> Read by Whitman at the Commencement of Dart-  
 mouth College, in 1872.

The poem originally began with what is now Section  
 2, and the title as well as the first line was 'As a strong  
 bird on pinions free.' What is now Section 1 was added  
 in the 1881 edition.

See the original Preface of this poem, in the Com-  
 plete Prose Works, pp. 268-272. One of its chief ideas  
 is condensed in two paragraphs near the end:—

'The Four Years' War is over — and in the peaceful,  
 strong, exciting, fresh occasions of to-day, and of the  
 future, that strange, sad war is hurrying even now to  
 be forgotten. The camp, the drill, the lines of sentries,  
 the prisons, the hospitals — (ah! the hospitals!) — all  
 have passed away — all seem now like a dream. A new  
 race, a young and lusty generation, already sweeps in  
 with oceanic currents, obliterating the war, and all its  
 scars, its mounded graves, and all its reminiscences of  
 hatred, conflict, death. So let it be obliterated. I say  
 the life of the present and the future makes undeniable  
 demands upon us each and all, south, north, east, west.  
 To help put the United States (even if only in imagina-  
 tion) hand in hand, in one unbroken circle in a chant  
 — to rouse them to the unprecedented grandeur of the  
 part they are to play, and are even now playing — to  
 the thought of their great future, and the attitude con-  
 form'd to it — especially their great esthetic, moral,  
 scientific future (of which their vulgar material and  
 political present is but as the preparatory tuning of in-  
 struments by an orchestra), these, as hitherto, are still,  
 for me, among my hopes, ambitions.

'"Leaves of Grass," already publish'd, is, in its in-  
 tentions, the song of a great composite *democratic indi-  
 vidual*, male or female. And following on and ampli-  
 fying the same purpose, I suppose I have in my mind  
 to run through the chants of this volume (if ever com-  
 pleted), the thread-voice, more or less audible, of an  
 aggregated, inseparable, unprecedented, vast, compe-  
 lite, electric *democratic nationality*.'

Compare also Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, Com-  
 plete Prose Works, pp. 197-250; "A Backward Glance



A special song before I go I'd sing o'er all  
the rest,  
For thee, the future.

I'd sow a seed for thee of endless Nation-  
ality,  
I'd fashion thy ensemble including body  
and soul,  
I'd show away ahead thy real Union, and  
how it may be accomplish'd.

The paths to the house I seek to make,  
But leave to those to come the house it-  
self.

Belief I sing, and preparation; <sup>10</sup>  
As Life and Nature are not great with ref-  
erence to the present only,  
But greater still from what is yet to  
come,  
Out of that formula for thee I sing.

<sup>2</sup>  
As a strong bird on pinions free,  
Joyous, the amplest spaces heavenward  
cleaving,  
Such be the thought I'd think of thee  
America,  
Such be the recitative I'd bring for thee.

The conceits of the poets of other lands I'd  
bring thee not,  
Nor the compliments that have served their  
turn so long,  
Nor rhyme, nor the classics, nor perfume  
of foreign court or indoor library; <sup>20</sup>  
But an odor I'd bring as from forests of  
pine in Maine, or breath of an Illinois  
prairie,  
With open airs of Virginia or Georgia or  
Tennessee, or from Texas uplands, or  
Florida's glades,  
Or the Saguenay's black stream, or the  
wide blue spread of Huron,  
With presentment of Yellowstone's scenes,  
or Yosemite,  
And murmuring under, pervading all, I'd  
bring the rustling sea-sound,  
That endlessly sounds from the two Great  
Seas of the world.

o'er Travel'd Roads;" and, especially, one of Whitman's  
early notes, in *Notes and Fragments*, p. 59: —

'In Poems — bring in the idea of Mother — the idea  
of the mother with numerous children — all, great and  
small, old and young, equal in her eyes — as the iden-  
tity of America.'

And for thy subtler sense subtler refrains  
dread Mother,  
Preludes of intellect tallying these and  
thee, mind-formulas fitted for thee, real  
and sane and large as these and thee,  
Thou! mounting higher, diving deeper than  
we knew, thou transcendental Union!  
By thee fact to be justified, blended with  
thought, <sup>30</sup>  
Thought of man justified, blended with  
God,  
Through thy idea, lo, the immortal reality!  
Through thy reality, lo, the immortal idea!

<sup>3</sup>  
Brain of the New World, what a task is  
thine,  
To formulate the Modern — out of the peer-  
less grandeur of the modern,  
Out of thyself, comprising science, to recast  
poems, churches, art,  
(Recast, may-be discard them, end them —  
may-be their work is done, who knows?)  
By vision, hand, conception, on the back-  
ground of the mighty past, the dead,  
To limn with absolute faith the mighty liv-  
ing present.

And yet thou living present brain, heir of  
the dead, the Old World brain, <sup>40</sup>  
Thou that lay folded like an unborn babe  
within its folds so long,  
Thou carefully prepared by it so long —  
haply thou but unfoldest it, only maturest  
it,  
It to eventuate in thee — the essence of the  
by-gone time contain'd in thee,  
Its poems, churches, arts, unwitting to  
themselves, destined with reference to  
thee;  
Thou but the apples, long, long, long a-grow-  
ing,  
The fruit of all the Old ripening to-day in  
thee.

<sup>4</sup>  
Sail, sail thy best, ship of Democracy,  
Of value is thy freight, 't is not the Present  
only,  
The Past is also stored in thee,  
Thou holdest not the venture of thyself  
alone, not of the Western continent  
alone, <sup>50</sup>  
Earth's résumé entire floats on thy keel O  
ship, is steadied by thy spars,

With thee Time voyages in trust, the  
 antecedent nations sink or swim with  
 thee,  
 With all their ancient struggles, martyrs,  
 heroes, epics, wars, thou bear'st the other  
 continents,  
 Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the desti-  
 nation-port triumphant;  
 Steer then with good strong hand and wary  
 eye O helmsman, thou carriest great  
 companions,  
 Venerable priestly Asia sails this day with  
 thee,  
 And royal feudal Europe sails with thee.

## 5

Beautiful world of new superber birth that  
 rises to my eyes,  
 Like a limitless golden cloud filling the  
 western sky,  
 Emblem of general maternity lifted above  
 all,  
 Sacred shape of the bearer of daughters  
 and sons,  
 Out of thy teeming womb thy giant babes  
 in ceaseless procession issuing,  
 Acceding from such gestation, taking and  
 giving continual strength and life,  
 World of the real — world of the twain in  
 one,  
 World of the soul, born by the world of the  
 real alone, led to identity, body, by it  
 alone,  
 Yet in beginning only, incalculable masses  
 of composite precious materials,  
 By history's cycles forwarded, by every  
 nation, language, hither sent,  
 Ready, collected here, a freer, vast, elec-  
 tric world, to be constructed here  
 (The true New World, the world of orbic  
 science, morals, literatures to come),  
 Thou wonder world yet undefined, un-  
 form'd, neither do I define thee,  
 How can I pierce the impenetrable blank  
 of the future?  
 I feel thy ominous greatness evil as well as  
 good,  
 I watch thee advancing, absorbing the  
 present, transcending the past,  
 I see thy light lighting, and thy shadow  
 shadowing, as if the entire globe,  
 But I do not undertake to define thee,  
 hardly to comprehend thee,  
 I but thee name, thee prophesy, as now,  
 I merely thee ejaculate!

Thee in thy future,  
 Thee in thy only permanent life, career, thy  
 own unloosen'd mind, thy soaring spirit,  
 Thee as another equally needed sun, radi-  
 ant, ablaze, swift-moving, fructifying all,  
 Thee risen in potent cheerfulness and joy,  
 in endless great hilarity,  
 Scattering for good the cloud that hung so  
 long, that weigh'd so long upon the mind  
 of man,  
 The doubt, suspicion, dread, of gradual,  
 certain decadence of man;  
 Thee in thy larger, saner brood of female,  
 male — thee in thy athletes, moral,  
 spiritual, South, North, West, East,  
 (To thy immortal breasts, Mother of All,  
 thy every daughter, son, endear'd alike,  
 forever equal,)  
 Thee in thy own musicians, singers, artists,  
 unborn yet, but certain,  
 Thee in thy moral wealth and civilization,  
 (until which thy proudest material civili-  
 zation must remain in vain,)  
 Thee in thy all-supplying, all-enclosing  
 worship — thee in no single bible, saviour,  
 merely,  
 Thy saviours countless, latent within thy-  
 self, thy bibles incessant within thyself,  
 equal to any, divine as any.  
 (Thy soaring course thee formulating, not  
 in thy two great wars, nor in thy cen-  
 tury's visible growth,  
 But far more in these leaves and chants,  
 thy chants, great Mother!)<sup>1</sup>  
 Thee in an education grown of thee, in  
 teachers, studies, students, born of thee,  
 Thee in thy democratic fêtes en-masse, thy  
 high original festivals, operas, lecturers,  
 preachers,  
 Thee in thy ultimata (the preparations  
 only now completed, the edifice on sure  
 foundations tied),  
 Thee in thy pinnacles, intellect, thought,  
 thy topmost rational joys, thy love and  
 godlike aspiration,  
 In thy resplendent coming literati, thy full-  
 lung'd orators, thy sacerdotal bards, kos-  
 mic savans,  
 These! these in thee (certain to come), to-  
 day I prophesy.

## 6

Land tolerating all, accepting all, not for  
 the good alone, all good for thee,

<sup>1</sup> The two lines in parentheses were added in 1881.

Land in the realms of God to be a realm  
unto thyself,  
Under the rule of God to be a rule unto  
thyself. 100

(Lo, where arise three peerless stars,  
To be thy natal stars my country, Ensem-  
ble, Evolution, Freedom,  
Set in the sky of Law.)

Land of unprecedented faith, God's faith,  
Thy soil, thy very subsoil, all upheav'd,  
The general inner earth so long so sedu-  
lously draped over, now hence for what  
it is boldly laid bare,  
Open'd by thee to heaven's light for benefit  
or bale.

Not for success alone,  
Not to fair-sail unintermitted always,  
The storm shall dash thy face, the murk of  
war and worse than war shall cover thee  
all over, 110  
(Wert capable of war, its tug and trials?  
be capable of peace, its trials,  
For the tug and mortal strain of nations  
come at last in prosperous peace, not war;)  
In many a smiling mask death shall ap-  
proach beguiling thee, thou in disease  
shalt swelter,  
The livid cancer spread its hideous claws,  
clinging upon thy breasts, seeking to  
strike thee deep within,  
Consumption of the worst, moral consump-  
tion, shall rouge thy face with hectic,<sup>1</sup>  
But thou shalt face thy fortunes, thy dis-  
eases, and surmount them all,  
Whatever they are to-day and whatever  
through time they may be,  
They each and all shall lift and pass away  
and cease from thee,  
While thou, Time's spirals rounding, out  
of thyself, thyself still extricating, fusing,  
Equable, natural, mystical Union thou  
(the mortal with immortal blent), 120  
Shalt soar toward the fulfilment of the fu-  
ture, the spirit of the body and the mind,  
The soul, its destinies.

The soul, its destinies, the real real,  
(Purport of all these apparitions of the  
real;)  
In thee America, the soul, its destinies,

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Democratic Vistas*, pp. 203-208; and *Two Rivulets*, 1876, the prose section.

Thou globe of globes! thou wonder nebu-  
lous!

By many a throe of heat and cold convuls'd  
(by these thyself solidifying),

Thou mental, moral orb — thou New, in-  
deed new, Spiritual World!

The Present holds thee not — for such  
vast growth as thine,

For such unparallel'd flight as thine, such  
brood as thine, 130

The FUTURE only holds thee and can hold  
thee.

1872.

### PRAYER OF COLUMBUS<sup>2</sup>

A BATTER'D, wreck'd old man,  
Thrown on this savage shore, far, far from  
home,  
Pent by the sea and dark rebellious brows,  
twelve dreary months,  
Sore, stiff with many toils, sicken'd and nigh  
to death,  
I take my way along the island's edge,  
Venting a heavy heart.

I am too full of woe!  
Haply I may not live another day;  
I cannot rest O God, I cannot eat or drink  
or sleep,  
Till I put forth myself, my prayer, once  
more to Thee, 10  
Breathe, bathe myself once more in Thee,  
commune with Thee,  
Report myself once more to Thee.

Thou knowest my years entire, my life,  
My long and crowded life of active work,  
not adoration merely;

<sup>2</sup> It was near the close of his indomitable and pious life — on his last voyage when nearly 70 years of age — that Columbus, to save his two remaining ships from foundering in the Caribbean Sea in a terrible storm, had to run them ashore on the Island of Jamaica — where, laid up for a long and miserable year — 1503 — he was taken very sick, had several relapses, his men revolted, and death seem'd daily imminent; though he was eventually rescued, and sent home to Spain to die, unrecognized, neglected and in want. . . . It is only ask'd, as preparation and atmosphere for the following lines, that the bare authentic facts be recall'd and realized, and nothing contributed by the fancy. See, the Antillean Island, with its florid skies and rich foliage and scenery, the waves beating the solitary sands, and the hulls of the ships in the distance. See, the figure of the great Admiral, walking the beach, as a stage, in this sublimest tragedy — for what tragedy, what poem, so piteous and majestic as the real scene? — and hear him uttering — as his mystical and religious soul surely utter'd, the ideas following — perhaps, in their equivalents, the very words. (WHITMAN.)

Thou knowest the prayers and vigils of my youth,  
 Thou knowest my manhood's solemn and visionary meditations,  
 Thou knowest how before I commenced I devoted all to come to Thee,  
 Thou knowest I have in age ratified all those vows and strictly kept them,  
 Thou knowest I have not once lost nor faith nor ecstasy in Thee,  
 In shackles, prison'd, in disgrace, repining not,  
 Accepting all from Thee, as duly come from Thee.

All my emprises have been fill'd with Thee,  
 My speculations, plans, begun and carried on in thoughts of Thee,  
 Sailing the deep or journeying the land for Thee;  
 Intentions, purports, aspirations mine, leaving results to Thee.

O I am sure they really came from Thee,  
 The urge, the ardor, the unconquerable will,  
 The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than words,  
 A message from the Heavens whispering to me even in sleep,  
 These sped me on.

By me and these the work so far accomplish'd,  
 By me earth's elder cloy'd and stifled lands uncloy'd, unloos'd,  
 By me the hemispheres rounded and tied, the unknown to the known.

The end I know not, it is all in Thee,  
 Or small or great I know not — haply what broad fields, what lands,  
 Haply the brutish measureless human undergrowth I know,  
 Transplanted there may rise to stature, knowledge worthy Thee,  
 Haply the swords I know may there indeed be turn'd to reaping-tools,  
 Haply the lifeless cross I know, Europe's dead cross, may bud and blossom there.

One effort more, my altar this bleak sand;  
 That Thou O God my life hast lighted,  
 With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee,

Light rare untellable, lighting the very light,  
 Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages;  
 For that O God, be it my latest word, here on my knees,  
 Old, poor, and paralyzed, I thank Thee.

My terminus near,  
 The clouds already closing in upon me,  
 The voyage balk'd, the course disputed, lost,  
 I yield my ships to Thee.

My hands, my limbs grow nerveless,  
 My brain feels rack'd, bewilder'd,  
 Let the old timbers part, I will not part,  
 I will cling fast to Thee, O God, though the waves buffet me,  
 Thee, Thee at least I know.

Is it the prophet's thought I speak, or am I raving?  
 What do I know of life? what of myself?  
 I know not even my own work past or present,  
 Dim ever-shifting guesses of it spread before me,  
 Of newer better worlds, their mighty parturition,  
 Mocking, perplexing me.

And these things I see suddenly, what mean they?  
 As if some miracle, some hand divine unseal'd my eyes,  
 Shadowy vast shapes smile through the air and sky,  
 And on the distant waves sail countless ships,  
 And anthems in new tongues I hear saluting me.

1874. (1876.)

### COME, SAID MY SOUL<sup>1</sup>

COME, SAID MY SOUL,  
 SUCH VERSES FOR MY BODY LET US WRITE, (FOR WE ARE ONE),  
 THAT SHOULD I AFTER DEATH INVISIBLY RETURN,  
 OR, LONG, LONG HENCE, IN OTHER SPHERES,

<sup>1</sup> The Inscription, signed with Whitman's autograph, to the 1876 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, and to all the following editions authorized by him.

THERE TO SOME GROUP OF MATES THE  
 CHANTS RESUMING,  
 (TALLYING EARTH'S SOIL, TREES, WINDS,  
 TUMULTUOUS WAVES,)
   
EVER WITH PLEAS'D SMILE I MAY KEEP  
 ON,  
 EVER AND EVER YET THE VERSES OWN-  
 ING — AS, FIRST, I HERE AND NOW,  
 SIGNING FOR SOUL AND BODY, SET TO  
 THEM MY NAME,

WALT WHITMAN.

1876.

### WHEN THE FULL-GROWN POET CAME

WHEN the full-grown poet came,  
 Out spake pleased Nature (the round im-  
 passive globe, with all its shows of day  
 and night), saying, *He is mine;*  
 But out spake too the Soul of man, proud,  
 jealous and unreconciled, *Nay, he is mine*  
*alone;*  
 — Then the full-grown poet stood between  
 the two, and took each by the hand;  
 And to-day and ever so stands, as blender,  
 uniter, tightly holding hands,  
 Which he will never release until he re-  
 conciles the two,  
 And wholly and joyously blends them.

1876.

### TO THE MAN-OF-WAR-BIRD

THOU who hast slept all night upon the  
 storm,  
 Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions  
 (Burst the wild storm? above it thou as-  
 cended'st,  
 And rested on the sky, thy slave that  
 cradled thee),  
 Now a blue point, far, far in heaven float-  
 ing,  
 As to the light emerging here on deck I  
 watch thee  
 (Myself a speck, a point on the world's  
 floating vast).

Far, far at sea,  
 After the night's fierce drifts have strewn  
 the shore with wrecks,  
 With reappearing day as now so happy  
 and serene,

The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,  
 The limpid spread of air cerulean,  
 Thou also reappearest.

Thou born to match the gale (thou art all  
 wings),  
 To cope with heaven and earth and sea and  
 hurricane,  
 Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy  
 sails,  
 Days, even weeks untired and onward,  
 through spaces, realms gyrating,  
 At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn  
 America,  
 That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and  
 thunder-cloud,  
 In them, in thy experiences, had'st thou  
 my soul,  
 What joys! what joys were thine!

1876.

### THE OX-TAMER

IN a far-away northern county in the placid  
 pastoral region,  
 Lives my farmer friend, the theme of my  
 recitative, a famous tamer of oxen,  
 There they bring him the three-year-olds  
 and the four-year-olds to break them,  
 He will take the wildest steer in the world  
 and break him and tame him,  
 He will go fearless without any whip where  
 the young bullock chafes up and down  
 the yard,  
 The bullock's head tosses restless high in  
 the air with raging eyes,  
 Yet see you! how soon his rage subsides —  
 how soon this tamer tames him;  
 See you! on the farms hereabout a hun-  
 dred oxen young and old, and he is the  
 man who has tamed them,  
 They all know him, all are affectionate to  
 him;  
 See you! some are such beautiful animals,  
 so lofty looking;  
 Some are buff-color'd, some mottled, one  
 has a white line running along his back,  
 some are brindled,  
 Some have wide flaring horns (a good sign)  
 — see you! the bright hides,  
 See, the two with stars on their foreheads  
 — see, the round bodies and broad  
 backs,  
 How straight and square they stand on  
 their legs — what fine sagacious eyes!

How they watch their tamer — they wish  
him near them — how they turn to look  
after him !

What yearning expression ! how uneasy they  
are when he moves away from them ;  
Now I marvel what it can be he appears to  
them (books, politics, poems, depart —  
all else departs),

I confess I envy only his fascination — my  
silent, illiterate friend,  
Whom a hundred oxen love there in his life  
on farms,  
In the northern county far, in the placid  
pastoral region.

1876.

### TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER<sup>1</sup>

THEE for my recitative,  
Thee in the driving storm even as now, the  
snow, the winter-day declining,  
Thee in thy panoply, thy measur'd dual  
throbbing and thy beat convulsive,  
Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and  
silvery steel,  
Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and con-  
necting rods, gyrating, shuttling at thy  
sides,  
Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar,  
now tapering in the distance,  
Thy great protruding head-light fix'd in  
front,  
Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants,  
tinged with delicate purple,  
The dense and murky clouds out-belching  
from thy smoke-stack,  
Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves,  
the tremulous twinkle of thy wheels,  
Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily  
following,  
Through gale or calm, now swift, now  
slack, yet steadily careering;  
Type of the modern — emblem of motion  
and power — pulse of the continent,

<sup>1</sup> Contrast Wordsworth's attitude toward the rail-  
road and its invasion of natural scenes! And compare  
Whitman's *Specimen Days*, April 29, 1879: —

'It was a happy thought to build the Hudson River  
railroad right along the shore. . . . I see, hear, the  
locomotives and cars, rumbling, roaring, flaming, smok-  
ing, constantly, away off there, night and day — less  
than a mile distant, and in full view by day. I like  
both sight and sound. Express trains thunder and  
lighten along; of freight trains, most of them very  
long, there cannot be less than a hundred a day. At  
night far down you see the headlight approaching,  
coming steadily on like a meteor. The river at night  
has its special character-beauties.' 1876, vol. 1, p. 369.

For once come serve the Muse and merge  
in verse, even as here I see thee,  
With storm and buffeting gusts of wind  
and falling snow,  
By day thy warning ringing bell to sound  
its notes,  
By night thy silent signal lamps to swing.

Fierce-throated beauty !

Roll through my chant with all thy law-  
less music, thy swinging lamps at night,  
Thy madly-whistled laughter, echoing,  
rumbling like an earthquake, rousing all.  
Law of thyself complete, thine own track  
firmly holding,

(No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or  
glib piano thine,)

Thy trills of shrieks by rocks and hills  
return'd,

Launch'd o'er the prairies wide, across the  
lakes,

To the free skies unpent and glad and  
strong.

1876.

### AFTER AN INTERVAL

(NOVEMBER 22, 1875, MIDNIGHT—SATURN  
AND MARS IN CONJUNCTION)

AFTER an interval, reading, here in the  
midnight,

With the great stars looking on — all the  
stars of Orion looking,

And the silent Pleiades — and the duo  
looking of Saturn and ruddy Mars;

Pondering, reading my own songs, after a  
long interval (sorrow and death familiar  
now),

Ere closing the book, what pride ! what  
joy ! to find them,

Standing so well the test of death and  
night !

And the duo of Saturn and Mars !

1876.<sup>1</sup>

### TO FOREIGN LANDS

I HEARD that you ask'd for something to  
prove this puzzle the New World,

And to define America, her athletic Democ-  
racy,

Therefore I send you my poems that you  
behold in them what you wanted.

1881.

<sup>1</sup> 1876 only. Omitted from later editions.



WHAT BEST I SEE IN THEE<sup>1</sup>  
TO U. S. G. RETURN'D FROM HIS WORLD'S  
TOUR

WHAT best I see in thee,  
Is not that where thou mov'st down history's  
great highways,  
Ever undimm'd by time shoots warlike  
victory's dazzle,  
Or that thou sat'st where Washington sat,  
ruling the land in peace,  
Or thou the man whom feudal Europe fêted,  
venerable Asia swarm'd upon,  
Who walk'd with kings with even pace the  
round world's promenade;  
But that in foreign lands, in all thy walks  
with kings,  
Those prairie sovereigns of the West, Kan-  
sas, Missouri, Illinois,  
Ohio's, Indiana's millions, comrades, farm-  
ers, soldiers, all to the front,  
Invisibly with thee walking with kings with  
even pace the round world's promenade,  
Were all so justified.

1881.

<sup>1</sup> So General Grant, after circumambulating the world, has arrived home again, landed in San Francisco yesterday, from the ship City of Tokio from Japan. What a man he is! what a history! what an illustration — his life — of the capacities of that American individuality common to us all. Cynical critics are wondering 'what the people can see in Grant' to make such a hubbub about. They aver (and it is no doubt true) that he has hardly the average of our day's literary and scholastic culture, and absolutely no pronounced genius or conventional eminence of any sort. Correct: but he proves how an average western farmer, mechanic, boatman, carried by tides of circumstances, perhaps caprices, into a position of incredible military or civic responsibilities (history has presented none more trying, no born monarch's, no mark more shining for attack or envy), may steer his way fitly and steadily through them all, carrying the country and himself with credit year after year — command over a million armed men — fight more than fifty pitched battles — rule for eight years a land larger than all the kingdoms of Europe combined — and then, retiring, quietly (with a cigar in his mouth), make the promenade of the whole world, through its courts and coteries, and kings and czars and mikados, and splendor and glitter, and etiquettes, as phlegmatically as he ever walk'd the portico of a Missouri hotel after dinner. I say all this is what people like — and I am sure I like it. Seems to me it transcends Plutarch. How those old Greeks, indeed, would have seized on him! A mere plain man — no art, no poetry — only practical sense, ability to do, or try his best to do, what devolv'd upon him. A common trader, money-maker, tanner, farmer of Illinois — general for the republic, in its terrific struggle with itself, in the war of attempted secession — President following (a task of peace, more difficult than the war itself) — nothing heroic, as the authorities put it — and yet the greatest hero. The gods, the destinies, seem to have concentrated upon him. (*Specimen Days*, September 27, 1879. Complete Prose Works, pp. 146, 147.) See also Whitman's poem: 'On the Death of General Grant.'

SPIRIT THAT FORM'D THIS  
SCENE<sup>2</sup>

WRITTEN IN PLATTE CAÑON, COLORADO

SPIRIT that form'd this scene,  
These tumbled rock-piles grim and red,  
These reckless heaven-ambitious peaks,  
These gorges, turbulent-clear streams, this  
naked freshness,  
These formless wild arrays, for reasons of  
their own,  
I know thee, savage spirit — we have com-  
muned together,  
Mine too such wild arrays, for reasons of  
their own;  
Was't charged against my chants they had  
forgotten art?  
To fuse within themselves its rules precise  
and delicatessen?  
The lyrist's measur'd beat, the wrought-out  
temple's grace — column and polish'd  
arch forgot?  
But thou that revelest here — spirit that  
form'd this scene,  
They have remember'd thee.

1881.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Whitman's entry in his journal during his trip through Colorado: —

'I have found the law of my own poems,' was the unspoken but more-and-more decided feeling that came to me as I pass'd, hour after hour, amid all this grim yet joyous elemental abandon — this plenitude of material, entire absence of art, untrammel'd play of primitive Nature — the chasm, the gorge, the crystal mountain stream, repeated scores, hundreds of miles — the broad handling and absolute uncrampedness — the fantastic forms, bathed in transparent browns, faint reds and grays, towering sometimes a thousand, sometimes two or three thousand feet high — at their tops now and then huge masses pois'd, and mixing with the clouds, with only their outlines, hazed in misty lilac, visible. ('In Nature's grandest shows,' says an old Dutch writer, an ecclesiastic, 'amid the ocean's depth, if so might be, or countless worlds rolling above at night, a man thinks of them, weighs all, not for themselves or the abstract, but with reference to his own personality, and how they may affect him or color his destinies.')'

We follow the stream of amber and bronze brawling along its bed, with its frequent cascades and snow-white foam. Through the cañon we fly — mountains not only each side, but seemingly, till we get near, right in front of us — every rood a new view flashing and each flash defying description — on the almost perpendicular sides, clinging pines, cedars, spruces, crimson sumach bushes, spots of wild grass — but dominating all, those towering rocks, rocks, rocks, bathed in delicate vari-colors, with the clear sky of autumn overhead. New senses, new joys, seem develop'd. Talk as you like, a typical Rocky Mountain cañon, or a limitless sea-like stretch of the great Kansas or Colorado plains, under favoring circumstances, tallies, perhaps expresses, certainly awakes, those grandest and subtlest element-emotions in the human soul, that all the marble temples and sculptures from Phidias to Thorwaldsen — all paintings, poems, reminiscences, or even music, probably never can. (*Specimen Days*. Complete Prose Works, Small, Maynard & Co., p. 136.)



## YOUTH, DAY, OLD AGE AND NIGHT

YOUTH, large, lusty, loving — youth full of grace, force, fascination,  
Do you know that Old Age may come after you with equal grace, force, fascination?

Day full-blown and splendid — day of the immense sun, action, ambition, laughter,  
The Night follows close with millions of suns, and sleep and restoring darkness.<sup>1</sup>

1881.

## A CLEAR MIDNIGHT

THIS is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless,  
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done,  
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes thou lovest best,  
Night, sleep, death and the stars.

1881.

## WITH HUSKY-HAUGHTY LIPS, O SEA!<sup>2</sup>

WITH husky-haughty lips, O sea!  
Where day and night I wend thy surf-beat shore,  
Imaging to my sense thy varied strange suggestions  
(I see and plainly list thy talk and conference here),  
Thy troops of white-maned racers racing to the goal,  
Thy ample, smiling face, dash'd with the sparkling dimples of the sun,  
Thy brooding scowl and murk — thy unloos'd hurricanes,

<sup>1</sup> Compare the passages in Whitman's Prose Works referred to in the notes on pp. 564 and 579.

<sup>2</sup> July 26, '81. *Far Rockaway, L. I.* — A good day here, on a jaunt, amid the sand and salt, a steady breeze setting in from the sea, the sun shining, the sedge-odor, the noise of the surf, a mixture of hissing and booming, the milk-white crests curling over. I had a leisurely bath and naked ramble as of old, on the warm-gray shore-sands, my companions off in a boat in deeper water — (I shouting to them Jupiter's menaces against the gods, from Pope's Homer.) (*Specimen Days*. Complete Prose Works, Small, Maynard & Co., pp. 176, 177.)

Thy unsubduedness, caprices, wilfulness;  
Great as thou art above the rest, thy many tears — a lack from all eternity in thy content,

(Naught but the greatest struggles, wrongs, defeats, could make thee greatest — no less could make thee,)

Thy lonely state — something thou ever seek'st and seek'st, yet never gain'st,  
Surely some right withheld — some voice, in huge monotonous rage, of freedom-lover pent,

Some vast heart, like a planet's, chain'd and chafing in those breakers,

By lengthen'd swell, and spasm, and panting breath,

And rhythmic rasping of thy sands and waves,

And serpent hiss, and savage peals of laughter,

And undertones of distant lion roar,

(Sounding, appealing to the sky's deaf ear — but now, rapport for once,

A phantom in the night thy confidant for once,)

The first and last confession of the globe, Outsurgings, muttering from thy soul's abysses,

The tale of cosmic elemental passion, Thou tellest to a kindred soul.

1884. (1888.)

## OF THAT BLITHE THROAT OF THINE

[More than eighty-three degrees north — about a good day's steaming distance to the Pole by one of our fast oceaners in clear water — Greely the explorer heard the song of a single snow-bird merrily sounding over the desolation.]

OF that blithe throat of thine from arctic bleak and blank,

I'll mind the lesson, solitary bird — let me too welcome chilling drifts,

E'en the profoundest chill, as now — a torpid pulse, a brain unnerv'd,

Old age land-lock'd within its winter bay (cold, cold, O cold!) —

These snowy hairs, my feeble arm, my frozen feet,

For them thy faith, thy rule I take, and grave it to the last;

Not summer's zones alone — not chants of youth, or south's warm tides alone,

But held by sluggish flocs, pack'd in the  
northern ice, the cumulus of years,  
These with gay heart I also sing.

1885. (1888.)

### AS THE GREEK'S SIGNAL FLAME

[FOR WHITTIER'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY,  
DECEMBER 17, 1887.]

As the Greek's signal flame, by antique re-  
cords told,  
Rose from the hill-top, like applause and  
glory,  
Welcoming in fame some special veteran,  
hero,  
With rosy tinge reddening the land he'd  
served,  
So I aloft from Mannahatta's ship-fringed  
shore,  
Lift high a kindled brand for thee, Old  
Poet.

1887. (1888.)

### TO THOSE WHO 'VE FAIL'D

To those who've fail'd, in aspiration vast,  
To unnam'd soldiers fallen in front on the  
lead,  
To calm, devoted engineers — to over-ardent  
travelers — to pilots on their ships,  
To many a lofty song and picture without  
recognition — I'd rear a laurel-cover'd  
monument,  
High, high above the rest — To all cut off  
before their time,  
Possess'd by some strange spirit of fire,  
Quench'd by an early death.

1888.

### A CAROL CLOSING SIXTY- NINE

A CAROL closing sixty-nine — a *résumé* —  
a repetition,  
My lines in joy and hope continuing on the  
same,  
Of ye, O God, Life, Nature, Freedom,  
Poetry;  
Of you, my Land — your rivers, prairies,  
States — you, mottled Flag I love,

Your aggregate retain'd entire — O north,  
south, east and west, your items all;  
Of me myself — the jocund heart yet beat-  
ing in my breast,  
The body wreck'd, old, poor and paralyzed  
— the strange inertia falling pall-like  
round me,  
The burning fires down in my sluggish  
blood not yet extinct,  
The undiminish'd faith — the groups of lov-  
ing friends.<sup>1</sup>

1888.

### THE FIRST DANDELION

SIMPLE and fresh and fair from winter's  
close emerging,  
As if no artifice of fashion, business, poli-  
tics, had ever been,  
Forth from its sunny nook of shelter'd  
grass — innocent, golden, calm as the  
dawn,  
The spring's first dandelion shows its trust-  
ful face.

1888.

### THE VOICE OF THE RAIN

AND who art thou? said I to the soft-fall-  
ing shower,  
Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer,  
as here translated:  
I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of  
the rain,  
Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land  
and the bottomless sea,  
Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd,  
altogether changed, and yet the same,

<sup>1</sup> Compare, in Complete Prose Works, p. 190, the letter of May 31, 1882: 'From to-day I enter upon my 64th year. The paralysis that first affected me nearly ten years ago, has since remain'd, with varying course — seems to have settled quietly down, and will probably continue. I easily tire, am very clumsy, cannot walk far; but my spirits are first-rate. I go around in public almost every day — now and then take long trips, by railroad or boat, hundreds of miles — live largely in the open air — am sunburnt and stout (weigh 190), — keep up my activity and interest in life, people, progress, and the questions of the day. About two thirds of the time I am quite comfortable. What mentality I ever had remains entirely unaffected; though physically I am a half-paralytic, and likely to be so, long as I live. But the principal object of my life seems to have been accomplish'd — I have the most devoted and ardent of friends, and affectionate relatives — and of enemies I really make no account.'

I descend to lave the drouths, atomies, dust-  
layers of the globe,  
And all that in them without me were seeds  
only, latent, unborn;  
And forever, by day and night, I give back  
life to my own origin, and make pure and  
beautify it;  
(For song, issuing from its birthplace, after  
fulfilment, wandering,  
Reck'd or unreck'd, duly with love returns.)  
1888.

### A PRAIRIE SUNSET

SHOT gold, maroon and violet, dazzling  
silver, emerald, fawn,  
The earth's whole amplitude and Nature's  
multiform power consign'd for once to  
colors;  
The light, the general air possess'd by  
them — colors till now unknown,  
No limit, confine — not the Western sky  
alone — the high meridian — North,  
South, all,  
Pure luminous color fighting the silent  
shadows to the last.  
1888.

### THANKS IN OLD AGE

THANKS in old age — thanks ere I go,  
For health, the midday sun, the impalpable  
air — for life, mere life,  
For precious ever-lingering memories, (of  
you my mother dear — you, father —  
you, brothers, sisters, friends,)  
For all my days — not those of peace alone  
— the days of war the same,  
For gentle words, caresses, gifts from for-  
eign lands,  
For shelter, wine and meat — for sweet ap-  
preciation,  
(You distant, dim unknown — or young or  
old — countless, unspecified, readers be-  
lov'd,  
We never met, and ne'er shall meet — and  
yet our souls embrace, long, close and  
long;)  
For beings, groups, love, deeds, words,  
books — for colors, forms,  
For all the brave strong men — devoted,  
hardy men — who've forward sprung in  
freedom's help, all years, all lands,

For braver, stronger, more devoted men —  
(a special laurel ere I go, to life's war's  
chosen ones,  
The cannoneers of song and thought — the  
great artillerists — the foremost leaders,  
captains of the soul:)  
As soldier from an ended war return'd —  
As traveler out of myriads, to the long  
procession retrospective,  
Thanks — joyful thanks! — a soldier's,  
traveler's thanks.  
1888.

### MY 71ST YEAR

AFTER surmounting three-score and ten,  
With all their chances, changes, losses, sor-  
rows,  
My parents' deaths, the vagaries of my  
life, the many tearing passions of me,  
the war of '63 and '4,  
As some old broken soldier, after a long,  
hot, wearying march, or haply after  
battle,  
To-day at twilight, hobbling, answering  
company roll-call, *Here*, with vital voice,  
Reporting yet, saluting yet the Officer over  
all.  
1891.

### OLD AGE'S SHIP & CRAFTY DEATH'S

FROM east and west across the horizon's  
edge,  
Two mighty masterful vessels sailers steal  
upon us:  
But we'll make race a-time upon the seas  
— a battle-contest yet! bear lively  
there!  
(Our joys of strife and derring-do to the  
last!)  
Put on the old ship all her power to-day!  
Crowd top-sail, top-gallant and royal stud-  
ding-sails,  
Out challenge and defiance — flags and  
flaunting pennants added,  
As we take to the open — take to the deep-  
est, freest waters.  
1891.

### THE COMMONPLACE

THE commonplace I sing;  
How cheap is health! how cheap nobility!

**A**bstinence, no falsehood, no gluttony, lust;  
**T**he open air I sing, freedom, toleration  
 (**T**ake here the mainest lesson — less from  
 books — less from the schools,)  
**T**he common day and night — the common  
 earth and waters,  
**Y**our farm — your work, trade, occupation,  
**T**he democratic wisdom underneath, like  
 solid ground for all.

1891.

## L. OF G.'S PURPORT

**N**OT to exclude or demarcate, or pick out  
 evils from their formidable masses (even  
 to expose them),  
**B**ut add, fuse, complete, extend — and  
 celebrate the immortal and the good.

**H**aughty this song, its words and scope,  
**T**o span vast realms of space and time,  
**E**volution — the cumulative — growths and  
 generations.

**B**egun in ripen'd youth and steadily pur-  
 sued,  
**W**andering, peering, dallying with all —  
 war, peace, day and night absorbing,  
**N**ever even for one brief hour abandoning  
 my task,  
**I** end it here in sickness, poverty, and old  
 age.

**I** sing of life, yet mind me well of death:  
**T**o-day shadowy Death dogs my steps, my  
 seated shape, and has for years —  
**D**raws sometimes close to me, as face to  
 face.

1891.

## THE UNEXPRESS'D

**H**ow dare one say it?  
**A**fter the cycles, poems, singers, plays,  
**V**aulted Ionia's, India's — Homer, Shak-  
 spere — the long, long times' thick dotted  
 roads, areas,  
**T**he shining clusters and the Milky Ways  
 of stars — Nature's pulses reap'd,  
**A**ll retrospective passions, heroes, war,  
 love, adoration,  
**A**ll ages' plummet dropt to their utmost  
 depths,  
**A**ll human lives, throats, wishes, brains —  
 all experiences' utterance;

**A**fter the countless songs, or long or short,  
 all tongues, all lands,  
**S**till something not yet told in poesy's voice  
 or print — something lacking,  
 (Who knows? the best yet unexpress'd and  
 lacking.)

1891.

## GOOD-BYE MY FANCY!

**GOOD-BYE** my Fancy!  
 Farewell dear mate, dear love!  
 I'm going away, I know not where,  
 Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever  
 see you again,  
**S**o Good-bye my Fancy.

**N**ow for my last — let me look back a  
 moment;  
**T**he slower fainter ticking of the clock is  
 in me,  
**E**xit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud  
 stopping.

**L**ong have we lived, joy'd, caress'd to-  
 gether;  
**D**elightful! — now separation — Good-bye  
 my Fancy.

**Y**et let me not be too hasty,  
**L**ong indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd,  
 become really blended into one;  
**T**hen if we die we die together (yes, we'll  
 remain one),  
**I**f we go anywhere we'll go together to  
 meet what happens,  
**M**ay-be we'll be better off and blither, and  
 learn something,  
**M**ay-be it is yourself now really ushering  
 me to the true songs, (who knows?)  
**M**ay-be it is you the mortal knob really  
 undoing, turning — so now finally,  
**G**ood-bye — and hail! my Fancy.

1891.

## DEATH'S VALLEY

To accompany a picture; by request. 'The Valley of  
 the Shadow of Death,' from the painting by George  
 Inness.

**N**AY, do not dream, designer dark,  
 Thou hast portray'd or hit thy theme en-  
 tire;

I, hoverer of late by this dark valley, by  
its confines, having glimpses of it,  
Here enter lists with thee, claiming my  
right to make a symbol too.  
For I have seen many wounded soldiers  
die,  
After dread suffering — have seen their  
lives pass off with smiles;  
And I have watch'd the death-hours of the  
old; and seen the infant die;  
The rich, with all his nurses and his doc-  
tors;  
And then the poor, in meagreness and  
poverty;  
And I myself for long, O Death, have  
breath'd my every breath  
Amid the nearness and the silent thought  
of thee.

And out of these and thee,  
I make a scene, a song (not fear of thee,  
Nor gloom's ravines, nor bleak, nor dark  
— for I do not fear thee,  
Nor celebrate the struggle, or contortion,  
or hard-tied knot),  
Of the broad blessed light and perfect air,  
with meadows, rippling tides, and trees  
and flowers and grass,  
And the low hum of living breeze — and  
in the midst God's beautiful eternal right  
hand,  
Thee, holiest minister of Heaven — thee,  
envoy, usherer, guide at last of all,  
Rich, florid, loosener of the stricture-knot  
call'd life,  
Sweet, peaceful, welcome Death.

1896. (1897.)

## SIDNEY LANIER

[The poems from Lanier are printed by the kind permission of Mrs. Sidney Lanier, and of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, the authorized publishers of Lanier's Works.]

### THE DYING WORDS OF STONE- WALL JACKSON

'Order A. P. Hill to prepare for battle.'  
'Tell Major Hawks to advance the Commissary train.'  
'Let us cross the river and rest in the shade.'

THE stars of Night contain the glittering  
Day  
And rain his glory down with sweeter grace  
Upon the dark World's grand, enchanted  
face —  
All loth to turn away.

And so the Day, about to yield his breath,  
Utters the stars unto the listening Night,  
To stand for burning fare-thee-wells of  
light  
Said on the verge of death.

O hero-life that lit us like the sun!  
O hero-words that glittered like the stars  
And stood and shone above the gloomy  
wars  
When the hero-life was done!

The phantoms of a battle came to dwell  
I' the fitful vision of his dying eyes —  
Yet even in battle-dreams, he sends sup-  
plies  
To those he loved so well.

His army stands in battle-line arrayed:  
His couriers fly: all's done: now God de-  
cide!  
— And not till then saw he the Other Side  
Or would accept the shade.

Thou Land whose sun is gone, thy stars  
remain!  
Still shine the words that miniature his  
deeds.  
O thrice-beloved, where'er thy great heart  
bleeds,  
Solace hast thou for pain!

1865.

1884.

### NIGHT AND DAY

THE innocent, sweet Day is dead.  
Dark Night hath slain her in her bed.  
O, Moors are as fierce to kill as to wed!  
— Put out the light, said he.

A sweeter light than ever rayed  
From star of heaven or eye of maid  
Has vanished in the unknown Shade.  
— She's dead, she's dead, said he.

Now, in a wild, sad after-mood  
The tawny Night sits still to brood  
Upon the dawn-time when he wooed.  
— I would she lived, said he.

Star-memories of happier times,  
Of loving deeds and lovers' rhymes,  
Throng forth in silvery pantomimes.  
— Come back, O Day! said he.

1866.

1884.

### SONG FOR 'THE JACQUERIE'<sup>1</sup>

THE hound was cuffed, the hound was  
kicked,  
O' the ears was cropped, o' the tail was  
nicked,  
(All.) Oo-hoo-o, howled the hound.  
The hound into his kennel crept;  
He rarely wept, he never slept.

<sup>1</sup> One of Lanier's early plans was for a long poem in heroic couplets, with lyric interludes, on the insurrection of the French peasantry in the fourteenth century. 'Although,' says Mrs. Lanier, "'The Jacquerie'" remained a fragment for thirteen years, Mr. Lanier's interest in the subject never abated. Far on in this interval he is found planning for leisure to work out in romance the story of that savage insurrection of the French peasantry, which the *Chronicles of Froissart* had impressed upon his boyish imagination.' 'It was the first time,' says Lanier himself, in a letter of November 15, 1874, 'that the big hungers of the *Peuple* appear in our modern civilization; and it is full of significance.' Five chapters of the story, and three lyrics, were completed. See the *Poems*, pp. 191-214.

His mouth he always open kept  
 Licking his bitter wound,  
 The hound,  
 (All.) U-lu-lo, *howled the hound.*

A star upon his kennel shone  
 That showed the hound a meat-bare bone.  
 (All.) O hungry was the hound !  
 The hound had but a churlish wit.  
 He seized the bone, he crunched, he bit.  
 'An thou wert Master, I had slit  
 Thy throat with a huge wound,'  
 Quo' hound.  
 (All.) O, angry was the hound.

The star in castle-window shone,  
 The Master lay abed, alone.  
 (All.) Oh ho, why not ? quo' hound.  
 He leapt, he seized the throat, he tore  
 The Master, head from neck, to floor,  
 And rolled the head i' the kennel door,  
 And fled and salved his wound,  
 Good hound !  
 (All.) U-lu-lo, *howled the hound.*  
 1868. 1884.

### MY SPRINGS

In the heart of the Hills of Life, I know  
 Two springs that with unbroken flow  
 Forever pour their lucent streams  
 Into my soul's far Lake of Dreams.

Not larger than two eyes, they lie  
 Beneath the many-changing sky  
 And mirror all of life and time,  
 — Serene and dainty pantomime.

Shot through with lights of stars and dawns,  
 And shadowed sweet by ferns and fawns, 10  
 — Thus heaven and earth together vie  
 Their shining depths to sanctify.

Always when the large Form of Love  
 Is hid by storms that rage above,  
 I gaze in my two springs and see  
 Love in his very verity.

Always when Faith with stifling stress  
 Of grief hath died in bitterness,  
 I gaze in my two springs and see  
 A Faith that smiles immortally. 20

Always when Charity and Hope,  
 In darkness bounden, feebly grope,

I gaze in my two springs and see  
 A Light that sets my captives free.

Always, when Art on perverse wing  
 Flies where I cannot hear him sing,  
 I gaze in my two springs and see  
 A charm that brings him back to me.

When Labor faints, and Glory fails,  
 And coy Reward in sighs exhales, 30  
 I gaze in my two springs and see  
 Attainment full and heavenly.

O Love, O Wife, thine eyes are they,  
 — My springs from out whose shining gray  
 Issue the sweet celestial streams  
 That feed my life's bright Lake of Dreams.

Oval and large and passion-pure  
 And gray and wise and honor-sure;  
 Soft as a dying violet-breath  
 Yet calmly unafraid of death; 40

Thronged, like two dove-cotes of gray  
 doves,  
 With wife's and mother's and poor-folk's  
 loves,  
 And home-loves and high glory-loves  
 And science-loves and story-loves,

And loves for all that God and man  
 In art and nature make or plan,  
 And lady-loves for spidery lace  
 And broideries and supple grace

And diamonds and the whole sweet round  
 Of littles that large life compound, 50  
 And loves for God and God's bare truth,  
 And loves for Magdalen and Ruth,

Dear eyes, dear eyes and rare complete —  
 Being heavenly-sweet and earthly-sweet,  
 — I marvel that God made you mine,  
 For when He frowns, 't is then ye shine !  
 1874. 1882.

### THE SYMPHONY<sup>1</sup>

'O TRADE ! O Trade ! would thou wert  
 dead !  
 The Time needs heart — 't is tired of  
 head:

<sup>1</sup> I have so many fair dreams and hopes about music in these days. It is a gospel whereof the people are in great need. As Christ gathered up the ten command-



We 're all for love,' the violins said.<sup>1</sup>  
 'Of what avail the rigorous tale  
 Of bill for coin and box for bale?  
 Grant thee, O Trade! thine uttermost hope:  
 Level red gold with blue sky-slope,  
 And base it deep as devils grope:  
 When all's done, what hast thou won  
 Of the only sweet that's under the sun? 10  
 Ay, canst thou buy a single sigh  
 Of true love's least, least ecstasy?'  
 Then, with a bridegroom's heart-beats  
 trembling,  
 All the mightier strings assembling  
 Ranged them on the violins' side  
 As when the bridegroom leads the bride,  
 And, heart in voice, together cried:  
 'Yea, what avail the endless tale  
 Of gain by cunning and plus by sale?  
 Look up the land, look down the land, 20  
 The poor, the poor, the poor, they stand  
 Wedged by the pressing of Trade's hand  
 Against an inward-opening door  
 That pressure tightens evermore:  
 They sigh a monstrous foul-air sigh  
 For the outside leagues of liberty,  
 Where Art, sweet lark, translates the sky  
 Into a heavenly melody.  
 "Each day, all day" (these poor folks say),  
 "In the same old year-long, drear-long  
 way, 30  
 We weave in the mills and heave in the  
 kilns,  
 We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,  
 And thief much gold from the Devil's  
 bank tills,  
 To relieve, O God, what manner of ills? —  
 The beasts, they hunger, and eat, and die;  
 And so do we, and the world's a sty;  
 Hush, fellow-swine: why nuzzle and cry?  
*Swinehood hath no remedy*  
 Say many men, and hasten by,  
 Clamping the nose and blinking the eye. 40  
 But who said once, in the lordly tone,  
*Man shall not live by bread alone*  
*But all that cometh from the Throne?*  
 Hath God said so?  
 But Trade saith *No*:

ments and re-distilled them into the clear liquid of that  
 wondrous eleventh — Love God utterly, and thy neigh-  
 bor as thyself — so I think the time will come when  
 music, rightly developed to its now-little-foreseen gran-  
 deur, will be found to be a later revelation of all gospels  
 in one. (LANIER, in a letter of March 12, 1876. *The*  
*Letters of Sidney Lanier*, p. 113.)

<sup>1</sup> Music . . . is utterly unconscious of aught but  
 Love. (LANIER, in a letter of October, 1866. *The Letters*  
*of Sidney Lanier*, p. 66.)

And the kilns and the curt-tongued mills  
 say *Go!*  
*There's plenty that can, if you can't: we*  
*know.*  
*Move out, if you think you're underpaid.*  
*The poor are prolific; we're not afraid;*  
*Trade is trade."* 50  
 Thereat this passionate protesting  
 Meekly changed, and softened till  
 It sank to sad requesting  
 And suggesting sadder still:  
 'And oh, if men might sometime see  
 How piteous-false the poor decree  
 That trade no more than trade must be!  
 Does business mean, *Die, you — live, I?*  
 Then "Trade is trade" but sings a lie:  
 'Tis only war grown miserly. 60  
 If business is battle, name it so:  
 War-crimes less will shame it so,  
 And widows less will blame it so.  
 Alas, for the poor to have some part  
 In yon sweet living lands of Art,  
 Makes problem not for head, but heart.  
 Vainly might Plato's brain revolve it:  
 Plainly the heart of a child could solve it.'

And then, as when from words that seem  
 but rude  
 We pass to silent pain that sits abroad 70  
 Back in our heart's great dark and solitude,  
 So sank the strings to gentle throbbing  
 Of long chords change-marked with sob-  
 bing —  
 Motherly sobbing, not distinctlier heard  
 Than half wing-openings of the sleeping  
 bird,  
 Some dream of danger to her young hath  
 stirred.  
 Then stirring and demurring ceased, and lo!  
 Every least ripple of the strings' song-flow  
 Diod to a level with each level bow  
 And made a great chord tranquil-surfaced  
 so, 80  
 As a brook beneath his curving bank doth  
 go  
 To linger in the sacred dark and green  
 Where many boughs the still pool overlean  
 And many leaves make shadow with their  
 sheen.

But presently  
 A velvet flute-note fell down pleasantly  
 Upon the bosom of that harmony,  
 And sailed and sailed incessantly,  
 As if a petal from a wild-rose blown  
 Had fluttered down upon that pool of tone

And boatwise dropped o' the convex side 91  
 And floated down the glassy tide  
 And clarified and glorified  
 The solemn spaces where the shadows bide.  
 From the warm concave of that fluted  
 note

Somewhat, half song, half odor, forth did  
 float,

As if a rose might somehow be a throat:

' When Nature from her far-off glen  
 Flutes her soft messages to men,

The flute can say them o'er again; 100

Yea, Nature, singing sweet and lone,  
 Breathes through life's strident polyphone  
 The flute-voice in the world of tone.

Sweet friends,

Man's love ascends

To finer and diviner ends

Than man's mere thought e'er compre-  
 hends

For I, e'en I,

As here I lie,

A petal on a harmony, 110

Demand of Science whence and why

Man's tender pain, man's inward cry,

When he doth gaze on earth and sky?

I am not overbold:

I hold

Full powers from Nature manifold.

I speak for each no-tongued tree

That, spring by spring, doth nobler be,

And dumbly and most wistfully

His mighty prayerful arms outspreads 120

Above men's oft-unheeding heads,

And his big blessing downward sheds.

I speak for all-shaped blooms and leaves,

Lichens on stones and moss on eaves,

Grasses and grains in ranks and sheaves;

Broad-fronded ferns and keen-leaved canes,

And briery mazes bounding lanes,

And marsh-plants, thirsty-cupped for rains,

And milky stems and sugary veins;

For every long-armed woman-vine 130

That round a piteous tree doth twine;

For passionate odors, and divine

Pistils, and petals crystalline;

All purities of shady springs,

All shynesses of film-winged things

That fly from tree-trunks and bark-rings;

All modesties of mountain-fawns

That leap to covert from wild lawns,

And tremble if the day but dawns;

All sparklings of small beady eyes 140

Of birds, and sidelong glances wise

Wherewith the jay hints tragedies;

All piquancies of prickly burs,  
 And smoothnesses of downs and furs,  
 Of eiders and of minevers;

All limpid honeys that do lie

At stamen-bases, nor deny

The humming-birds' fine roguery,

Bee-thighs, nor any butterfly;

All gracious curves of slender wings, 150

Bark-mottlings, fibre-spiralings,

Fern-wavings and leaf-flickerings;

Each dial-marked leaf and flower-bell

Wherewith in every lonesome dell

Time to himself his hours doth tell;

All tree-sounds, rustlings of pine-cones,

Wind-sighings, doves' melodious moans,

And night's unearthly under-tones;

All placid lakes and waveless deeps,

All cool reposing mountain-steeps, 160

Vale-calms and tranquil lotos-sleeps; —

Yea, all fair forms, and sounds, and lights,

And warmths, and mysteries, and might,

Of Nature's utmost depths and heights,

— These doth my timid tongue present,

Their mouthpiece and leal instrument

And servant, all love-eloquent.

I heard, when "*All for love*" the violins  
 cried:

So, Nature calls through all her system  
 wide,

*Give me thy love, O man, so long denied.* 170

Much time is run, and man hath changed  
 his ways,

Since Nature, in the antique fable-days,

Was hid from man's true love by proxy  
 fays,

False fauns and rascal gods that stole her  
 praise.

The nymphs, cold creatures of man's colder  
 brain;

Chilled Nature's streams till man's warm  
 heart was fain

Never to lave its love in them again.

Later, a sweet Voice *Love thy neighbor* said;

Then first the bounds of neighborhood out-  
 spread

Beyond all confines of old ethnic dread. 180

Vainly the Jew might wag his covenant  
 head:

"*All men are neighbors*," so the sweet Voice  
 said.

So, when man's arms had circled all man's  
 race,

The liberal compass of his warm embrace  
 Stretched bigger yet in the dark bounds of  
 space;

**With** hands a-grope he felt smooth Nature's  
grace,  
**Drew** her to breast and kissed her sweet-  
heart face:

**Yea**, man found neighbors in great hills and  
trees

**And** streams and clouds and suns and birds  
and bees,

**And** throbbed with neighbor-loves in loving  
these. 190

**But** oh, the poor! the poor! the poor!  
**That** stand by the inward-opening door  
**Trade's** hand doth tighten ever more,  
**And** sigh their monstrous foul-air sigh  
**For** the outside hills of liberty,  
**Where** Nature spreads her wild blue sky  
**For** Art to make into melody!

**Thou** Trade! thou king of the modern days!

Change thy ways,

Change thy ways; 200

**Let** the sweaty laborers file

A little while,

A little while,

**Where** Art and Nature sing and smile.

**Trade!** is thy heart all dead, all dead?

**And** hast thou nothing but a head?

**I'm** all for heart,' the flute-voice said,

**And** into sudden silence fled,

**Like** as a blush that while 't is red

**Dies** to a still, still white instead. 210

**Thereto** a thrilling calm succeeds,  
**Till** presently the silence breeds  
**A** little breeze among the reeds  
**That** seems to blow by sea-marsh weeds:

**Then** from the gentle stir and fret

**Sings** out the melting clarionet,

**Like** as a lady sings while yet

**Her** eyes with salty tears are wet.

**'O** Trade! **O** Trade!' the Lady said,

**'I** too will wish thee utterly dead 220

**If** all thy heart is in thy head.

**For** O my God! and O my God!

**What** shameful ways have women trod

**At** beckoning of Trade's golden rod!

**Alas** when sighs are traders' lies,

**And** heart's-ease eyes and violet eyes

**Are** merchandise!

**O** purchased lips that kiss with pain!

**O** cheeks coin-spotted with smirch and stain!

**O** trafficked hearts that break in twain! 230

**—And** yet what wonder at my sisters'  
crime?

**So** hath Trade withered up Love's sinewy  
prime,

Men love not women as in olden time.

Ah, not in these cold merchantable days

Deem men their life an opal gray, where  
plays

The one red Sweet of gracious ladies'-praise.

Now, comes a suitor with sharp prying  
eye—

Says, *Here, you Lady, if you'll sell, I'll buy:*

*Come, heart for heart—a trade? What!*  
*weeping? why?*

Shame on such wooers' dapper mercery!

I would my lover kneeling at my feet 241

In humble manliness should cry, *O sweet!*

*I know not if thy heart my heart will greet:*

*I ask not if thy love my love can meet:*

*Whate'er thy worshipful soft tongue shall say,*

*I'll kiss thine answer, be it yea or nay:*

*I do but know I love thee, and I pray*

*To be thy knight until my dying day.*

Woe him that cunning trades in hearts con-  
trives!

Base love good women to base loving  
drives. 250

If men loved larger, larger were our lives;

And wooed they nobler, won they nobler  
wives.'

There thrust the bold straightforward horn  
To battle for that lady lorn,

With heartsome voice of mellow scorn,

Like any knight in knighthood's morn.

'Now comfort thee,' said he,

'Fair Lady.

For God shall right thy grievous wrong,

And man shall sing thee a true-love song,

Voiced in act his whole life long, 261

Yea, all thy sweet life long,

Fair Lady.

Where's he that craftily hath said,

The day of chivalry is dead?

I'll prove that lie upon his head,

Or I will die instead,

Fair Lady.

Is Honor gone into his grave?

Hath Faith become a caitiff knave, 270

And Selfhood turned into a slave

To work in Mammon's cave,

Fair Lady?

Will Truth's long blade ne'er gleam again?

Hath Giant Trade in dungeons slain

All great contempts of mean-got gain

And hates of inward stain,

Fair Lady?

For aye shall name and fame be sold,

And place be hugged for the sake of gold,

And smirch-robed Justice feebly scold 281  
 At Crime all money-bold,  
 Fair Lady?  
 Shall self-wrapt husbands aye forget  
 Kiss-pardons for the daily fret  
 Wherewith sweet wifely eyes are wet —  
 Blind to lips kiss-wise set —  
 Fair Lady?  
 Shall lovers higgie, heart for heart,  
 Till wooing grows a trading mart 290  
 Where much for little, and all for part,  
 Make love a cheapening art,  
 Fair Lady?  
 Shall woman scorch for a single sin  
 That her betrayer may revel in,  
 And she be burnt, and he but grin  
 When that the flames begin,  
 Fair Lady?  
 Shall ne'er prevail the woman's plea,  
*We maids would far, far whiter be* 300  
*If that our eyes might sometimes see*  
*Men maids in purity,*  
 Fair Lady?  
 Shall Trade aye salve his conscience-aches  
 With jibes at Chivalry's old mistakes —  
 The wars that o'erhot knighthood makes  
 For Christ's and ladies' sakes,  
 Fair Lady?  
 Now by each knight that e'er hath prayed  
 To fight like a man and love like a maid, 310  
 Since Pembroke's life, as Pembroke's blade,  
 I' the scabbard, death, was laid,  
 Fair Lady,  
 I dare avouch my faith is bright  
 That God doth right and God hath might.  
 Nor time hath changed His hair to white,  
 Nor His dear love to spite,  
 Fair Lady.  
 I doubt no doubts: I strive, and shrive my  
 clay,  
 And fight my fight in the patient modern  
 way 320  
 For true love and for thee — ah me! and  
 pray  
 To be thy knight until my dying day,  
 Fair Lady.'  
 Made end that knightly horn, and spurred  
 away  
 Into the thick of the melodious fray.  
 And then the hautboy played and smiled,  
 And sang like any large-eyed child,  
 Cool-hearted and all undefiled.  
 'Huge Trade!' he said,  
 'Would thou wouldst lift me on thy head

And run where'er my finger led! 331  
 Once said a Man — and wise was He —  
*Never shalt thou the heavens see,*  
*Save as a little child thou be.'*  
 Then o'er sea-lashings of commingling  
 tunes  
 The ancient wise bassoons,  
 Like weird  
 Gray-beard  
 Old harpers sitting on the high sea-dunes,  
 Chanted runes: 340  
 'Bright-waved gain, gray-waved loss,  
 The sea of all doth lash and toss,  
 One wave forward and one across:  
 But now 't was trough, now 't is crest,  
 And worst doth foam and flash to best,  
 And curst to blest.  
 'Life! Life! thou sea-fugue, writ from  
 east to west,  
 Love, Love alone can pore  
 On thy dissolving score  
 Of harsh half-phrasings, 350  
 Blotted ere writ,  
 And double erasings  
 Of chords most fit.  
 Yea, Love, sole music-master blest,  
 May read thy weltering palimpsest  
 To follow Time's dying melodies through,  
 And never to lose the old in the new,  
 And ever to solve the discords true —  
 Love alone can do.  
 And ever Love hears the poor-folks' cry-  
 ing, 360  
 And ever Love hears the women's sighing,  
 And ever sweet knighthood's death-defy-  
 ing,  
 And ever wise childhood's deep implying,  
 But never a trader's glozing and lying.  
 'And yet shall Love himself be heard,  
 Though long deferred, though long de-  
 ferred:  
 O'er the modern waste a dove hath whirred:  
 Music is Love in search of a word.'  
 1875. 1875.

## EVENING SONG

Look off, dear Love, across the sallow  
 sands,  
 And mark yon meeting of the sun and  
 sea,  
 How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.  
 Ah! longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the  
sun,  
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,  
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,  
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort  
heaven's heart;  
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted  
sands.

O night ! divorce our sun and sky apart  
Never our lips, our hands.

1876.

1877.

# THE WAVING OF THE CORN<sup>1</sup>.

Ploughman, whose gnarly hand yet  
kindly wheeled  
Thy plough to ring this solitary tree  
With clover, whose round plat, reserved  
a-field,  
In cool green radius twice my length may  
be —

Scanting the corn thy furrows else might  
yield,  
To pleasure August, bees, fair thoughts,  
and me,  
That here come oft together — daily I,  
Stretched prone in summer's mortal  
ecstasy,  
Do stir with thanks to thee, as stirs this  
morn

With waving of the corn. 10

Unseen, the farmer's boy from round the  
hill

Whistles a snatch that seeks his soul un-  
sought,

And fills some time with tune, howbeit  
shrill;

The cricket tells straight on his simple  
thought —

Nay, 'tis the cricket's way of being still;  
The peddler bee drones in, and gossips  
naught;

Far down the wood, a one-desiring  
dove

Times me the beating of the heart of  
love:

And these be all the sounds that mix, each  
morn,

With waving of the corn. 20

From here to where the louder passions  
dwell,  
Green leagues of hilly separation roll:  
Trade ends where yon far clover ridges  
swell.

Ye terrible Towns, ne'er claim the trem-  
bling soul

That, craftless all to buy or hoard or sell,  
From out your deadly complex quarrel  
stole

To company with large amiable trees,  
Suck honey summer with unjealous  
bees,

And take Time's strokes as softly as this  
morn

Takes waving of the corn. 30  
1876. 1877.

## SONNETS ON COLUMBUS

### FROM THE PSALM OF THE WEST

. . . . .

COLUMBUS stands in the night alone, and,  
passing grave,

Yearns o'er the sea as tones o'er under-  
silence yearn.

Heartens his heart as friend befriends his  
friend less brave,

Makes burn the faiths that cool, and  
cools the doubts that burn: —

I

'Twixt this and dawn, three hours my  
soul will smite

With prickly seconds, or less tolerably  
With dull-blade minutes flatwise slapping  
me.

Wait, Heart ! Time moves. — Thou lithe  
young Western Night,

Just-crownèd king, slow riding to thy right,  
Would God that I might straddle mu-  
tiny

Calm as thou sitt'st yon never-managed  
sea,

Balk'st with his balking, fliest with his  
flight,

Giv'st supple to his rearings and his falls,  
Nor dropp'st one coronal star about thy  
brow

Whilst ever dayward thou art steadfast  
drawn !

Yea, would I rode these mad contentious  
brawls

<sup>1</sup> Compare the *Letters of Sidney Lanier*, p. 172, letter  
from Bayard Taylor.

No damage taking from their If and How,  
Nor no result save galloping to my Dawn!

## II

'My Dawn? my Dawn? How if it never  
break?  
How if this West by other Wests is  
pieced,  
And these by vacant Wests on Wests in-  
creased —  
One Pain of Space, with hollow ache on  
ache  
Throbbing and ceasing not for Christ's own  
sake? —  
Big perilous theorem, hard for king and  
priest:  
*Pursue the West but long enough, 't is  
East!*  
Oh, if this watery world no turning take!  
Oh, if for all my logic, all my dreams,  
Provings of that which is by that which  
seems,  
Fears, hopes, chills, heats, hastes, patiences,  
drougths, tears,  
Wife-grievings, slights on love, embezzled  
years,  
Hates, treaties, scorns, upliftings, loss and  
gain, —  
This earth, no sphere, be all one sickening  
plane!

## III

'Or, haply, how if this contrarious West,  
That me by turns hath starved, by turns  
hath fed,  
Embraced, disgraced, beat back, solicited,  
Have no fixed heart of Law within his  
breast,  
Or with some different rhythm doth e'er  
contest  
Nature in the East? Why, 't is but three  
weeks fled  
I saw my Judas needle shake his head  
And flout the Pole that, east, he Lord con-  
fessed!  
God! if this West should own some other  
Pole,  
And with his tangled way perplex my  
soul  
Until the maze grow mortal, and I die  
Where distraught Nature clean hath gone  
astray,  
On earth some other wit than Time's at  
play,  
Some other God than mine above the sky!

## IV

'Now speaks mine other heart with cheer-  
ier seeming:  
*Ho, Admiral! o'er-defalking to thy crew  
Against thyself, thyself far overfew  
To front yon multitudes of rebel scheming!*  
Come, ye wild twenty years of heavenly  
dreaming!  
Come, ye wild weeks since first this canvas  
drew  
Out of vexed Palos ere the dawn was  
blue,  
O'er milky waves about the bows full-  
creaming!  
Come set me round with many faithful  
spears  
Of confident remembrance — how I crushed  
Cat-lived rebellions, pitfalled treasons,  
hushed  
Scared husbands' heart-break cries on dis-  
tant wives,  
Made cowards blush at whining for their  
lives,  
Watered my parching souls, and dried their  
tears.

## V

'Ere we Gomera cleared, a coward cried,  
*Turn, turn: here be three caravels ahead,  
From Portugal, to take us: we are dead!*  
*Hold Westward, pilot, calmly I replied.*  
So when the last land down the horizon  
died,  
*Go back, go back! they prayed: our hearts  
are lead. —*  
*Friends, we are bound into the West, I  
said.*  
Then passed the wreck of a mast upon our  
side.  
*See (so they wept) God's Warning! Admi-  
ral, turn! —*  
*Steersman, I said, hold straight into the  
West.*  
Then down the night we saw the meteor  
burn.  
*So do the very heavens in fire protest:  
Good Admiral, put about! O Spain, dear  
Spain! —*  
*Hold straight into the West, I said again.*

## VI

'Next drive we o'er the slimy-weeded  
sea.  
*Lo! herebeneath (another coward cries)  
The cursèd land of sunk Atlantis lies:*



*This slime will suck us down — turn while  
thou'rt free! —  
But no! I said, Freedom bears West for me!  
Yet when the long-time stagnant winds  
arise, 80  
And day by day the keel to westward flies,  
My Good my people's Ill doth come to  
be:  
Ever the winds into the West do blow;  
Never a ship, once turned, might homeward  
go;  
Meanwhile we speed into the lonesome main.  
For Christ's sake, parley, Admiral! Turn,  
before  
We sail outside all bounds of help from  
pain! —  
Our help is in the West, I said once more.*

VII

*'So when there came a mighty cry of  
Land!  
And we clomb up and saw, and shouted  
strong 90  
Salve Regina! all the ropes along,  
But knew at morn how that a counterfeit  
band  
Of level clouds had aped a silver strand;  
So when we heard the orchard-bird's small  
song,  
And all the people cried, A hellish throng  
To tempt us onward by the Devil planned,  
Yea, all from hell — keen heron, fresh green  
weeds,  
Pelican, tunny-fish, fair tapering reeds,  
Lie-telling lands that ever shine and die  
In clouds of nothing round the empty sky. 100  
Tired Admiral, get thee from this hell, and  
rest! —  
Steersman, I said, hold straight into the West.*

VIII

*'I marvel how mine eye, ranging the Night,  
From its big circling ever absently  
Returns, thou large low Star, to fix on  
thee.  
Maria! Star? No star: a Light, a Light!  
Would'st leap ashore, Heart? Yonder burns  
— a Light.  
Pedro Gutierrez, wake! come up to me.  
I prithee stand and gaze about the sea:  
What seest? Admiral, like as Land — a  
Light! 110  
Well! Sanchez of Segovia, come and try:  
What seest? Admiral, naught but sea and  
sky!*

*Well! But I saw It. Wait! the Pinta's  
gun!  
Why, look, 't is dawn, the land is clear:  
't is done!  
Two dawns do break at once from Time's  
full hand —  
God's, East — mine, West: good friends,  
behold my Land!'*

1876.

1876.

TO BEETHOVEN

*In o'er-strict calyx lingering,  
Lay music's bud too long unblown,  
Till thou, Beethoven, breathed the spring:  
Then bloomed the perfect rose of tone.*

*O Psalmist of the weak, the strong,  
O Troubadour of love and strife,  
Co-Litanist of right and wrong,  
Sole Hymner of the whole of life,*

*I know not how, I care not why, —  
Thy music sets my world at ease, 10  
And melts my passion's mortal cry  
In satisfying symphonies.*

*It soothes my accusations sour  
'Gainst thoughts that fray the restless  
soul:  
The stain of death; the pain of power;  
The lack of love 'twixt part and whole;*

*The yea-nay of Freewill and Fate,  
Whereof both cannot be, yet are;  
The praise a poet wins too late  
Who starves from earth into a star; 20*

*The lies that serve great parties well,  
While truths but give their Christ a  
cross;  
The loves that send warm souls to hell,  
While cold-blood neuters take no loss;*

*Th' indifferent smile that nature's grace  
On Jesus, Judas, pours alike;  
Th' indifferent frown on nature's face  
When luminous lightnings strangely  
strike*

*The sailor praying on his knees 20  
And spare his mate that's cursing God;  
How babes and widows starve and freeze,  
Yet Nature will not stir a clod;*



Why Nature blinds us in each act  
 Yet makes no law in mercy bend,  
 No pitfall from our feet retract,  
 No storm cry out, *Take shelter, friend*;

Why snakes that crawl the earth should ply  
 Rattles, that whoso hears may shun,  
 While serpent lightnings in the sky,  
 But rattle when the deed is done; 40

How truth can e'er be good for them  
 That have not eyes to bear its strength,  
 And yet how stern our lights condemn  
 Delays that lend the darkness length;

To know all things, save knowingness;  
 To grasp, yet loosen, feeling's rein;  
 To waste no manhood on success;  
 To look with pleasure upon pain;

Though teased by small mixt social claims,  
 To lose no large simplicity, 50  
 And midst of clear-seen crimes and shames  
 To move with manly purity;

To hold, with keen, yet loving eyes,  
 Art's realm from Cleverness apart,  
 To know the Clever good and wise,  
 Yet haunt the lonesome heights of Art;

O Psalmist of the weak, the strong,  
 O Troubadour of love and strife,  
 Co-Litanist of right and wrong,  
 Sole Hymner of the whole of life, 60

I know not how, I care not why,  
 Thy music brings this broil at ease,  
 And melts my passion's mortal cry  
 In satisfying symphonies.

Yea, it forgives me all my sins,  
 Fits life to love like rhyme to rhyme,  
 And tunes the task each day begins  
 By the last trumpet-note of Time.

1876-77.

1877.

### THE MOCKING BIRD

SUPERB and sole, upon a plumed spray  
 That o'er the general leafage boldly grew,  
 He summ'd the woods in song; or typic  
 drew

The watch of hungry hawks, the lone dismay  
 Of languid doves when long their lovers  
 stray,

And all birds' passion-plays that sprinkle  
 dew  
 At morn in brake or bosky avenue.  
 Whate'er birds did or dreamed, this bird  
 could say.

Then down he shot, bounced airily along  
 The sword, twitched in a grasshopper, made  
 song  
 Midflight, perched, prinked, and to his art  
 again.

Sweet Science, this large riddle read me  
 plain:

How may the death of that dull insect be  
 The life of yon trim Shakspeare on the  
 tree? 1

1877.

### TAMPA ROBINS

THE robin laughed in the orange-tree:  
 'Ho, windy North, a fig for thee:  
 While breasts are red and wings are bold  
 And green trees wave us globes of gold,  
 Time's scythe shall reap but bliss for me  
 — Sunlight, song, and the orange-tree.

'Burn, golden globes in leafy sky,  
 My orange-planets: crimson I  
 Will shine and shoot among the spheres  
 (Blithe meteor that no mortal fears)  
 And thrid the heavenly orange-tree  
 With orbits bright of minstrelsy.

'If that I hate wild winter's spite —  
 The gibbet trees, the world in white,  
 The sky but gray wind over a grave —  
 Why should I ache, the season's slave?  
 I'll sing from the top of the orange-tree  
 Gramercy, winter's tyranny.

'I'll south with the sun, and keep my clime;  
 My wing is king of the summer-time;  
 My breast to the sun his torch shall hold;  
 And I'll call down through the green and  
 gold

*Time, take thy scythe, reap bliss for me,  
 Bestir thee under the orange-tree.'*

1877.

1877.

1 . . . Yon trim Shakspeare on the tree

leads back, almost twenty years from its writing, to the poet's college note-book, where we find the boy reflecting: 'A poet is the mocking-bird of the spiritual universe. In him are collected all the individual songs of all individual natures.' (Mrs. LANIER, note, in the *Poems*, 1882.)

FROM THE FLATS

WHAT heartache — ne'er a hill!  
Inexorable, vapid, vague and chill  
The drear sand-levels drain my spirit low.  
With one poor word they tell me all they  
    know;  
Whereat their stupid tongues, to tease my  
    pain,  
Do drawl it o'er again and o'er again.  
They hurt my heart with griefs I cannot  
    name:  
Always the same, the same.

Nature hath no surprise,  
No ambushade of beauty 'gainst mine eyes  
From brake or lurking dell or deep defile;  
No humors, frolic forms — this mile, that  
    mile;  
No rich reserves or happy-valley hopes  
Beyond the bend of roads, the distant slopes.  
Her fancy fails, her wild is all run tame:  
Ever the same, the same.

Oh, might I through these tears  
But glimpse some hill my Georgia high  
    uprears,  
Where white the quartz and pink the pebble  
    shine,  
The hickory heavenward strives, the mus-  
    cadine  
Swings o'er the slope, the oak's far-falling  
    shade  
Darkens the dogwood in the bottom glade,  
And down the hollow from a ferny nook  
    Lull sings a little brook!

1877.

1877.

THE STIRRUP-CUP

DEATH, thou'rt a cordial old and rare:  
Look how compounded, with what care!  
Time got his wrinkles reaping thee  
Sweet herbs from all antiquity.

David to thy distillage went,  
Keats, and Gotama excellent,  
Omar Khayyám, and Chaucer bright,  
And Shakspeare for a king-delight.

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:  
Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;  
'T is thy rich stirrup-cup to me;  
I'll drink it down right smilingly.

1877.

1877.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

OUT of the hills of Habersham,  
Down the valleys of Hall,  
I hurry amain to reach the plain,  
Run the rapid and leap the fall,  
Split at the rock and together again,  
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,  
And flee from folly on every side  
With a lover's pain to attain the plain  
Far from the hills of Habersham,  
Far from the valleys of Hall. 10

All down the hills of Habersham,  
All through the valleys of Hall,  
The rushes cried *Abide, abide*,  
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,  
The laving laurel turned my tide,  
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay*,  
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,  
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide*,  
    *Here in the hills of Habersham,*  
    *Here in the valleys of Hall.* 20

High o'er the hills of Habersham,  
Veiling the valleys of Hall,  
The hickory told me manifold  
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall  
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,  
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the  
    pine,  
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and  
    sign,  
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*  
    *Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,*  
    *These glades in the valleys of Hall.* 30

And oft in the hills of Habersham,  
And oft in the valleys of Hall,  
The white quartz shone, and the smooth  
    brook-stone  
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,  
And many a luminous jewel lone  
— Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,  
Ruby, garnet and amethyst —  
Made lures with the lights of streaming  
    stone  
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,  
In the beds of the valleys of Hall. 40

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,  
And oh, not the valleys of Hall  
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.  
Downward the voices of Duty call —

Downward, to toil and be mixed with the  
 main,  
 The dry fields burn, and the mills are to  
 turn,  
 And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,  
 And the lordly main from beyond the plain  
 Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,  
 Calls through the valleys of Hall. 50  
 1877. 1877.

### THE MARSHES OF GLYNN<sup>1</sup>

GLOOMS of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided  
 and woven  
 With intricate shades of the vines that my-  
 riad-cloven  
 Clamber the forks of the multiform  
 boughs, —  
 Emerald twilights, —  
 Virginal shy lights,  
 Wrought of the leaves to allure to the  
 whisper of vows,  
 When lovers pace timidly down through  
 the green colonnades  
 Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark  
 woods,  
 Of the heavenly woods and glades,  
 That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach  
 within 10  
 The wide sea-marshes of Glynn; —

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-  
 day fire, —  
 Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,  
 Chamber from chamber parted with waver-  
 ing arras of leaves, —  
 Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer  
 to the soul that grieves,  
 Pure with a sense of the passing of saints  
 through the wood,  
 Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with  
 good; —

O braided dusks of the oak and woven  
 shades of the vine,  
 While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-  
 day long did shine  
 Ye held me fast in your heart and I held  
 you fast in mine; 20

<sup>1</sup> The salt marshes of Glynn County, Georgia, im-  
 mediately around the sea-coast city of Brunswick.

The three 'Hymns of the Marshes' . . . are the only  
 written portions of a series of six 'Marsh Hymns' that  
 were designed by the author to form a separate volume.  
 (Mrs. LAMIER.)

But now when the noon is no more, and  
 riot is rest,  
 And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate  
 of the West,  
 And the slant yellow beam down the wood-  
 aisle doth seem  
 Like a lane into heaven that leads from a  
 dream, —  
 Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken  
 the soul of the oak,  
 And my heart is at ease from men, and the  
 wearisome sound of the stroke  
 Of the scythe of time and the trowel of  
 trade is low,  
 And belief overmasters doubt, and I know  
 that I know,  
 And my spirit is grown to a lordly great  
 compass within,  
 That the length and the breadth and the  
 sweep of the Marshes of Glynn 30  
 Will work me no fear like the fear they  
 have wrought me of yore  
 When length was fatigue, and when breadth  
 was but bitterness sore,  
 And when terror and shrinking and dreary  
 unnamable pain  
 Drew over me out of the merciless miles of  
 the plain, —

Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face  
 The vast sweet visage of space.  
 To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am  
 drawn,  
 Where the gray beach glimmering runs,  
 as a belt of the dawn,  
 For a mete and a mark  
 To the forest-dark : — 40  
 So:  
 Affable live-oak, leaning low, —  
 Thus — with your favor — soft, with a re-  
 verent hand  
 (Not lightly touching your person, Lord of  
 the land!),  
 Bending your beauty aside, with a step I  
 stand  
 On the firm-packed sand,  
 Free  
 By a world of marsh that borders a world  
 of sea.  
 Sinuous southward and sinuous northward  
 the shimmering band  
 Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of  
 the marsh to the folds of the land. 50  
 Inward and outward to northward and south-  
 ward the beach-lines linger and curl

As a silver-wrought garment that clings to  
and follows the firm sweet limbs of  
a girl.

Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving  
again into sight,

Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim  
gray looping of light.

And what if behind me to westward the  
wall of the woods stands high?

The world lies east: how ample, the marsh  
and the sea and the sky!

A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-  
high, broad in the blade,

Green, and all of a height, and unflecked  
with a light or a shade,

Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,  
To the terminal blue of the main. 60

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the  
terminal sea?

Somehow my soul seems suddenly free  
From the weighing of fate and the sad  
discussion of sin,

By the length and the breadth and the  
sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and no-  
thing-withholding and free

Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer  
yourselves to the sea!

Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the  
rains and the sun,

Ye spread and span like the catholic man  
who hath mightily won

God out of knowledge and good out of  
infinite pain

And sight out of blindness and purity out  
of a stain. 70

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the  
watery sod,

Behold I will build me a nest on the great-  
ness of God:

I will fly in the greatness of God as the  
marsh-hen flies

In the freedom that fills all the space  
'twixt the marsh and the skies:

By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends  
in the sod

I will heartily lay me a-hold on the great-  
ness of God:

Oh, like to the greatness of God is the  
greatness within

The range of the marshes, the liberal  
marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo,  
out of his plenty the sea

Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-  
tide must be: 80

Look how the grace of the sea doth go  
About and about through the intricate

channels that flow

Here and there,

Everywhere,

Till his waters have flooded the uttermost  
creeks and the low-lying lanes,

And the marsh is meshed with a million  
veins,

That like as with rosy and silvery essences  
flow

In the rose-and-silver evening glow.

Farewell, my lord Sun!

The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets  
run 90

'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of  
the marsh-grass stir;

Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that  
westward whirr;

Passeth, and all is still; and the currents  
cease to run;

And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!

The tide is in his ecstasy.

The tide is at his highest height:

And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will  
the waters of sleep

Roll in on the souls of men, 100

But who will reveal to our waking ken

The forms that swim and the shapes that  
creep

Under the waters of sleep?

And I would I could know what swimmeth  
below when the tide comes in

On the length and the breadth of the mar-  
vellous marshes of Glynn.

1878.

1879.

## THE REVENGE OF HAMISH

It was three slim does and a ten-tined buck  
in the bracken lay;

And all of a sudden the sinister smell of  
a man,

Awft on a wind-shift, wavered and ran  
Down the hillside and sifted along through  
the bracken and passed that way.

Then Nan got a-tremble at nostril; she was  
the daintiest doe;

In the print of her velvet flank on the  
velvet fern

She reared, and rounded her ears in turn.  
Then the buck leapt up, and his head as a  
king's to a crown did go

Full high in the breeze, and he stood as if  
Death had the form of a deer;

And the two slim does long lazily stretch-  
ing arose,

For their day-dream slower came to a  
close,

Till they woke and were still, breath-bound  
with waiting and wonder and fear.

Then Alan the huntsman sprang over the  
hillock, the hounds shot by,

The does and the ten-tined buck made a  
marvellous bound,

The hounds swept after with never a  
sound,

But Alan loud winded his horn in sign that  
the quarry was nigh.

For at dawn of that day proud Maclean of  
Lochbuy to the hunt had waxed  
wild,

And he cursed at old Alan till Alan fared  
off with the hounds

For to drive him the deer to the lower  
glen-grounds:

'I will kill a red deer,' quoth Maclean,  
'in the sight of the wife and the  
child.'

So gayly he paced with the wife and the  
child to his chosen stand;

But he hurried tall Hamish the hench-  
man ahead: 'Go turn,' —

Cried Maclean, — 'if the deer seek to  
cross to the burn,

Do thou turn them to me: nor fail, lest thy  
back be red as thy hand.'

Now hard-fortuned Hamish, half blown of  
his breath with the height of the  
hill,

Was white in the face when the ten-tined  
buck and the does

Drew leaping to burn-ward; huskily rose  
His shouts, and his nether lip twitched, and  
his legs were o'er-weak for his  
will.

So the deer darted lightly by Hamish and  
bounded away to the burn.

But Maclean never bating his watch tar-  
ried waiting below;

Still Hamish hung heavy with fear for  
to go

All the space of an hour; then he went, and  
his face was greenish and stern,

And his eye sat back in the socket, and  
shrunk the eye-balls shone,

As withdrawn from a vision of deeds it  
were shame to see.

'Now, now, grim henchman, what is 't  
with thee?'

Brake Maclean, and his wrath rose red as  
a beacon the wind hath upblown.

'Three does and a ten-tined buck made  
out,' spoke Hamish, full mild,

'And I ran for to turn, but my breath it  
was blown, and they passed;

I was weak, for ye called ere I broke me  
my fast.'

Cried Maclean: 'Now a ten-tined buck in  
the sight of the wife and the child

I had killed if the gluttonous kern had not  
wrought me a snail's own wrong!'

Then he sounded, and down came kins-  
men and clansmen all:

'Ten blows, for ten tine, on his back let  
fall,

And reckon no stroke if the blood follow  
not at the bite of thong!'

So Hamish made bare, and took him his  
strokes; at the last he smiled.

'Now I 'll to the burn,' quoth Maclean,  
'for it still may be,

If a slimmer-paunched henchman will  
hurry with me,

I shall kill me the ten-tined buck for a gift  
to the wife and the child!'

Then the clansmen departed, by this path  
and that; and over the hill

Sped Maclean with an outward wrath for  
an inward shame;

And that place of the lashing full quiet  
became;

And the wife and the child stood sad; and  
bloody-backed Hamish sat still.

But look! red Hamish has risen; quick  
about and about turns he.

'There is none betwixt me and the crag-top!' he screams under breath.

Then, livid as Lazarus lately from death,  
He snatches the child from the mother, and  
clambers the crag toward the sea.

Now the mother drops breath; she is dumb,  
and her heart goes dead for a space,  
Till the motherhood, mistress of death,  
shrieks, shrieks through the glen,  
And that place of the lashing is live with  
men,  
And Maclean, and the gillie that told him,  
dash up in a desperate race. 60

Not a breath's time for asking; an eye-  
glance reveals all the tale untold.  
They follow mad Hamish afar up the  
crag toward the sea,  
And the lady cries: 'Clansmen, run for  
a fee!  
Yon castle and lands to the two first hands  
that shall hook him and hold

'Fast Hamish back from the brink!' — and  
ever she flies up the steep,  
And the clansmen pant, and they sweat,  
and they jostle and strain.  
But, mother, 'tis vain; but, father, 'tis  
vain;  
Stern Hamish stands bold on the brink, and  
dangles the child o'er the deep.

Now a faintness falls on the men that run,  
and they all stand still.  
And the wife prays Hamish as if he were  
God, on her knees, 70  
Crying: 'Hamish! O Hamish! but please,  
but please  
For to spare him!' and Hamish still dangles  
the child, with a wavering will.

On a sudden he turns; with a sea-hawk  
scream, and a gibe, and a song,  
Cries: 'So; I will spare ye the child if, in  
sight of ye all,  
Ten blows on Maclean's bare back shall  
fall,  
And ye reckon no stroke if the blood follow  
not at the bite of the thong!'

Then Maclean he set hardly his tooth to his  
lip that his tooth was red,  
Breathed short for a space, said: 'Nay,  
but it never shall be!

Let me hurl off the damnable hound in  
the sea!'

But the wife: 'Can Hamish go fish us the  
child from the sea, if dead? 80

'Say yea! — Let them lash *me*, Hamish?'  
— 'Nay!' — 'Husband, the lashing  
will heal;  
But, oh, who will heal me the bonny  
sweet bairn in his grave?  
Could ye cure me my heart with the  
death of a knave?  
Quick! Love! I will bare thee — so —  
kneel!' Then Maclean 'gan slowly  
to kneel

With never a word, till presently down-  
ward he jerked to the earth.  
Then the henchman — he that smote  
Hamish — would tremble and lag;  
'Strike, hard!' quoth Hamish, full stern,  
from the crag;  
Then he struck him, and 'One!' sang  
Hamish, and danced with the child  
in his mirth.

And no man spake beside Hamish; he  
counted each stroke with a song.  
When the last stroke fell, then he moved  
him a pace down the height, 90  
And he held forth the child in the heart-  
aching sight  
Of the mother, and looked all pitiful grave,  
as repenting a wrong.

And there as the motherly arms stretched  
out with the thanksgiving prayer —  
And there as the mother crept up with a  
fearful swift pace,  
Till her finger nigh felt of the bairnie's  
face —  
In a flash fierce Hamish turned round and  
lifted the child in the air,

And sprang with the child in his arms from  
the horrible height in the sea,  
Shrill screeching, 'Revenge!' in the  
wind-rush; and pallid Maclean,  
Age-feeble with anger and impotent pain,  
Crawled up on the crag, and lay flat, and  
locked hold of dead roots of a tree,

And gazed hungrily o'er, and the blood  
from his back drip-dripped in the  
brine, 101

And a sea-hawk flung down a skeleton  
fish as he flew,  
And the mother stared white on the  
waste of blue,  
And the wind drove a cloud to seaward,  
and the sun began to shine.

1878.

1878.

### HOW LOVE LOOKED FOR HELL<sup>1</sup>

To heal his heart of long-time pain  
One day Prince Love for to travel was  
fain

With Ministers Mind and Sense.  
'Now what to thee most strange may be?'  
Quoth Mind and Sense. 'All things above,  
One curious thing I first would see —  
Hell,' quoth Love.

Then Mind rode in and Sense rode out:  
They searched the ways of man about.

First frightfully groaneth Sense. 10  
'T is here, 't is here,' and spurreth in fear  
To the top of the hill that hangeth above  
And plucketh the Prince: 'Come, come,  
't is here —'

'Where?' quoth Love —

'Not far, not far,' said shivering Sense  
As they rode on. 'A short way hence,  
— But seventy paces hence:  
Look, King, dost see where suddenly  
This road doth dip from the height above?  
Cold blew a mouldy wind by me' 20  
( 'Cold?' quoth Love)

'As I rode down, and the River was black,  
And yon-side, lo! an endless wrack  
And rabble of souls,' sighed Sense,  
'Their eyes upturned and begged and  
burned  
In brimstone lakes, and a Hand above  
Beat back the hands that upward  
yearned —'  
'Nay!' quoth Love —

'Yea, yea, sweet Prince; thyself shalt see,  
Wilt thou but down this slope with me; 30  
'T is palpable,' whispered Sense.  
At the foot of the hill a living rill  
Shone, and the lilies shone white above;

<sup>1</sup> This poem is quoted, with interesting comment, in Professor Josiah Royce's *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*. In Lanier's *Poems* this is No. iii of 'Street-Cries.'

'But now 't was black, 't was a river, this  
rill,'  
( 'Black?' quoth Love)

'Ay, black, but lo! the lilies grow,  
And yon-side where was woe, was woe, —  
Where the rabble of souls,' cried  
Sense,  
'Did shrivel and turn and beg and burn,  
Thrust back in the brimstone from above —  
Is banked of violet, rose, and fern:' 41  
'How?' quoth Love:

'For lakes of pain, yon pleasant plain  
Of woods and grass and yellow grain  
Doth ravish the soul and sense:  
And never a sigh beneath the sky,  
And folk that smile and gaze above' —  
'But saw'st thou here, with thine own  
eye,  
Hell?' quoth Love.

'I saw true hell with mine own eye, 50  
True hell, or light hath told a lie,  
True, verily,' quoth stout Sense.  
Then Love rode round and searched the  
ground,  
The caves below, the hills above;  
'But I cannot find where thou hast found  
Hell,' quoth Love.

There, while they stood in a green wood  
And marvelled still on Ill and Good,  
Came suddenly Minister Mind.  
'In the heart of sin doth hell begin: 60  
'T is not below, 't is not above,  
It lieth within, it lieth within:'  
( 'Where?' quoth Love)

'I saw a man sit by a corse;  
*Hell's in the murderer's breast: remorse!*  
Thus clamored his mind to his mind:  
Not fleshly dole is the sinner's goal,  
Hell's not below, nor yet above,  
'T is fixed in the ever-damned soul' —  
'Fixed?' quoth Love — 70

'Fixed: follow me, would'st thou but see:  
He weepeth under yon willow tree,  
Fast chained to his corse,' quoth  
Mind.  
Full soon they passed, for they rode fast,  
Where the piteous willow bent above.  
'Now shall I see at last, at last,  
Hell,' quoth Love.



There when they came Mind suffered  
shame:

'These be the same and not the same,'  
A-wondering whispered Mind. 80

Lo, face by face two spirits pace  
Where the blissful willow waves above:  
One saith: 'Do me a friendly grace' —  
( 'Grace ! ' quoth Love)

'Read me two Dreams that linger long,  
Dim as returns of old-time song  
That flicker about the mind.  
I dreamed (how deep in mortal sleep ! )  
I struck thee dead, then stood above,  
With tears that none but dreamers weep ;'  
'Dreams,' quoth Love; 91

'In dreams, again, I plucked a flower  
That clung with pain and stung with  
power,  
Yea, nettled me, body and mind.'  
' 'T was the nettle of sin, 't was medicine;  
No need nor seed of it here Above;  
In dreams of hate true loves begin.'  
'True,' quoth Love.

'Now strange,' quoth Sense, and 'Strange,'  
quoth Mind,  
'We saw it, and yet 't is hard to find, 100  
— But we saw it,' quoth Sense and  
Mind.  
Stretched on the ground, beautiful-  
crowned  
Of the piteous willow that wreathed above,  
'But I cannot find where ye have found  
Hell,' quoth Love.'

1878-79.

1884.

### TO BAYARD TAYLOR<sup>1</sup>

To range, deep-wrapt, along a heavenly  
height,  
O'erseeing all that man but under-  
sees;  
To loiter down lone alleys of delight,  
And hear the beating of the hearts of  
trees,

<sup>1</sup> On Lanier's friendship with Bayard Taylor, see Professor Mims's *Lanier and the Letters of Sidney Lanier*, pp. 117-215.

Lanier's beautiful picture of the Elysium of the Poets should be compared with Richard Hovey's, in 'Seaward: a Threnody on the Death of Thomas William Parsons.'

And think the thoughts that lilies speak in  
white

By greenwood pools and pleasant pas-  
sages;

With healthy dreams a-dream in flesh and  
soul,

To pace, in mighty meditations drawn,  
From out the forest to the open knoll  
Where much thyme is, whence blissful  
leagues of lawn 10

Betwixt the fringing woods to southward  
roll

By tender inclinations; mad with dawn,

Ablaze with fires that flame in silver dew  
When each small globe doth glass the  
morning-star,

Long ere the sun, sweet-smitten through  
and through

With dappled revelations read afar,  
Suffused with saintly ecstasies of blue  
As all the holy eastern heavens are, —

To fare thus fervid to what daily toil  
Employs thy spirit in that larger Land 20  
Where thou art gone; to strive, but not to  
moil

In nothings that do mar the artist's hand,  
Not drudge enriched, as grain rots back to  
soil, —

No profit out of death, — going, yet still  
at stand, —

Giving what life is here in hand to-day  
For that that 's in to-morrow's bush, per-  
chance, —

Of this year's harvest none in the barn to lay,  
All sowed for next year's crop, — a dull  
advance

In curves that come but by another way  
Back to the start, — a thriftless thrift of  
ants 30

Whose winter wastes their summer; O my  
Friend,

Freely to range, to muse, to toil, is thine:  
Thine, now, to watch with Homer sails that  
bend

Unstained by Helen's beauty o'er the  
brine

Tow'rds some clean Troy no Hector need  
defend

Nor flame devour; or, in some mild  
moon's shine,

Where amiabler winds the whistle heed,  
 To sail with Shelley o'er a bluer sea,  
 And mark Prometheus, from his fetters  
     freed,  
 Pass with Deucalion over Italy, <sup>40</sup>  
 While bursts the flame from out his eager  
     reed  
 Wild-stretching towards the West of  
     destiny;

Or, prone with Plato, Shakspeare, and a  
     throng  
 Of bards beneath some plane-tree's cool  
     eclipse  
 To gaze on glowing meads where, lingering  
     long,  
 Psyche's large Butterfly her honey sips;  
 Or, mingling free in choirs of German  
     song,  
 To learn of Goethe's life from Goethe's  
     lips;

These, these are thine, and we, who still are  
     dead,  
 Do yearn — nay, not to kill thee back  
     again <sup>50</sup>  
 Into this charnel life, this lowlihead,  
 Not to the dark of sense, the blinking  
     brain,  
 The hugged delusion drear, the hunger fed  
 On husks of guess, the monarchy of pain,

The cross of love, the wrench of faith, the  
     shame  
 Of science that cannot prove proof is, the  
     twist  
 Of blame for praise and bitter praise for  
     blame,  
 The silly stake and tether round the  
     wrist  
 By fashion fixed, the virtue that doth claim  
 The gains of vice, the lofty mark that's  
     missed <sup>60</sup>

By all the mortal space 'twixt heaven and  
     hell,  
 The soul's sad growth o'er stationary  
     friends  
 Who hear us from our height not well, not  
     well,  
 The slant of accident, the sudden bends  
 Of purpose tempered strong, the gambler's  
     spell,  
 The son's disgrace, the plan that e'er  
     depends

On others' plots, the tricks that passion  
     plays  
 (I loving you, you him, he none at all),  
 The artist's pain — to walk his blood-stained  
     ways,  
 A special soul, yet judged as general —  
 The endless grief of art, the sneer that  
     slays, <sup>71</sup>  
 The war, the wound, the groan, the fu-  
     neral pall —

Not into these, bright spirit, do we yearn  
 To bring thee back, but oh, to be, to be  
 Unbound of all these gyves, to stretch, to  
     spurn  
 The dark from off our dolorous lids, to  
     see  
 Our spark, Conjecture, blaze and sunwise  
     burn,  
 And suddenly to stand again by thee !

Ah, not for us, not yet, by thee to stand:  
 For us, the fret, the dark, the thorn, the  
     chill; <sup>80</sup>  
 For us, to call across unto thy Land,  
 'Friend, get thee to the minstrels' holy  
     hill,  
 And kiss those brethren for us, mouth and  
     hand,  
 And make our duty to our master Will.'  
 1879. 1879.

### MARSH SONG — AT SUNSET

OVER the monstrous shambling sea,  
 Over the Caliban sea,  
 Bright Ariel-cloud, thou lingerest:  
 Oh wait, oh wait, in the warm red West, —  
 Thy Prospero I'll be.

Over the humped and fishy sea,  
 Over the Caliban sea  
 O cloud in the West, like a thought in the  
     heart  
 Of pardon, loose thy wing, and start,  
 And do a grace for me.

Over the huge and huddling sea,  
 Over the Caliban sea,  
 Bring hither my brother Antonio, — Man, —  
 My injurer: night breaks the ban:  
 Brother, I pardon thee.

1879-80.

1882.

SUNRISE <sup>1</sup>

IN my sleep I was fain of their fellowship,  
fain  
Of the live-oak, the marsh, and the  
main.

The little green leaves would not let me  
alone in my sleep;  
Up-breathed from the marshes, a message  
of range and of sweep,

Interwoven with waftures of wild sea-  
liberties, drifting,

Came through the lapped leaves sifting,  
sifting,

Came to the gates of sleep.

Then my thoughts, in the dark of the  
dungeon-keep

Of the Castle of Captives hid in the City  
of Sleep,

Upstarted, by twos and by threes assem-  
bling: 10

The gates of sleep fell a-trembling  
Like as the lips of a lady that forth falter  
yes,

Shaken with happiness:

The gates of sleep stood wide.

I have waked, I have come, my beloved !  
I might not abide:

I have come ere the dawn, O beloved, my  
live-oaks, to hide

In your gospelling glooms, — to be  
As a lover in heaven, the marsh my marsh  
and the sea my sea.

Tell me, sweet burly-bark'd, man-bodied  
Tree

That mine arms in the dark are embracing,  
dost know 20

From what fount are these tears at thy feet  
which flow ?

They rise not from reason, but deeper in-  
consequent deeps.

Reason's not one that weeps.

What logic of greeting lies

<sup>1</sup> 'Sunrise,' Mr. Lanier's latest completed poem, was written while his sun of life seemed fairly at the setting, and the hand which first pencilled its lines had not strength to carry nourishment to the lips. . . .

'Sunrise,' the culminating poem, the highest vision of Sidney Lanier, was dedicated through his latest request to that friend who indeed came into his life only near its close, yet was at first meeting recognized by the poet as 'the father of his spirit,' George Westfieldt. When words were very few and the poem was unread, even by any friend, the earnest bidding came: 'Send him my "Sunrise," that he may know how entirely we are one in thought.' (*Poems*, 1884.)

Betwixt dear over-beautiful trees and the  
rain of the eyes ?

O cunning green leaves, little masters ! like  
as ye gloss

All the dull-tissued dark with your lumi-  
nous darks that emboss

The vague blackness of night into pattern  
and plan,

So

(But would I could know, but would I  
could know), 30

With your question embroid'ring the dark  
of the question of man, —

So, with your silences purfling this silence  
of man

While his cry to the dead for some know-  
ledge is under the ban,

Under the ban, —

So, ye have wrought me

Designs on the night of our knowledge, —  
yea, ye have taught me,

So,

That haply we know somewhat more  
than we know.

Ye lispers, whisperers, singers in storms,  
Ye consciences murmuring faiths un-  
der forms, 40

Ye ministers meet for each passion  
that grieves,

Friendly, sisterly, sweetheart leaves,

Oh, rain me down from your darks that  
contain me

Wisdoms ye winnow from winds that pain  
me, —

Sift down tremors of sweet-within-sweet

That advise me of more than they bring, —  
repeat

Me the woods-smell that swiftly but now  
brought breath

From the heaven-side bank of the river of  
death, —

Teach me the terms of silence, — preach  
me

The passion of patience, — sift me, — im-  
peach me, — 50

And there, oh there

As ye hang with your myriad palms up-  
turned in the air,

Pray me a myriad prayer.

My gossip, the owl, — is it thou  
That out of the leaves of the low-hanging  
bough,

As I pass to the beach, art stirred?  
Dumb woods, have ye uttered a bird?

Reverend Marsh, low-conched along the sea,  
Old chemist, rapt in alchemy,  
Distilling silence, — lo, 60  
That which our father-age had died to  
know —

The menstruum that dissolves all matter  
— thou

Hast found it: for this silence, filling now  
The globed clarity of receiving space,  
This solves us all: man, matter, doubt, dis-  
grace,

Death, love, sin, sanity,  
Must in yon silence' clear solution lie.  
Too clear! That crystal nothing who'll  
peruse?

The blackest night could bring us brighter  
news.

Yet precious qualities of silence haunt 70  
Round these vast margins, ministrant.

Oh, if thy soul's at latter gasp for space,  
With trying to breathe no bigger than thy  
race

Just to be fellow'd, when that thou hast  
found

No man with room, or grace enough of  
bound

To entertain that New thou tell'st, thou  
art, —

'Tis here, 'tis here thou canst unhand thy  
heart

And breathe it free, and breathe it free,  
By rangy marsh, in lone sea-liberty.

The tide's at full: the marsh with flooded  
streams 80

Glimmers, a limpid labyrinth of dreams.  
Each winding creek in grave entrancement  
lies

A rhapsody of morning-stars. The skies  
Shine scant with one forked galaxy, —  
The marsh brags ten: looped on his breast  
they lie.

Oh, what if a sound should be made!

Oh, what if a bound should be laid

To this bow-and-string tension of beauty  
and silence a-spring, —

To the bend of beauty the bow, or the hold  
of silence the string!

I fear me, I fear me yon dome of diapha-  
nous gleam 90

Will break as a bubble o'er-blown in a  
dream, —

Yon dome of too-tenuous tissues of space  
and of night,

Over-weighted with stars, over-freighted  
with light,

Over-sated with beauty and silence, will  
seem

But a bubble that broke in a dream,  
If a bound of degree to this grace be  
laid,

Or a sound or a motion made.

But no: it is made: list! somewhere, —  
mystery, where?

In the leaves? in the air?  
In my heart? is a motion made: 100

'Tis a motion of dawn, like a flicker of  
shade on shade.

In the leaves 'tis palpable: low multitu-  
dinous stirring

Upwinds through the woods; the little ones,  
softly conferring,

Have settled my lord's to be looked for;  
so; they are still;

But the air and my heart and the earth are  
a-thrill, —

And look where the wild duck sails round  
the bend of the river, —

And look where a passionate shiver  
Expectant is bending the blades

Of the marsh-grass in serial shimmers and  
shades, —

And invisible wings, fast fleeting, fast  
fleeting, 110

Are beating  
The dark overhead as my heart beats, —

and steady and free  
Is the ebb-tide flowing from marsh to sea

(Run home, little streams,  
With your lapfulls of stars and dreams),

And a sailor unseen is hoisting a-peak,  
For list, down the inshore curve of the creek

How merrily flutters the sail, —  
And lo, in the East! Will the East unveil?

The East is unveiled, the East hath con-  
fessed 120

A flush: 'tis dead; 'tis alive: 'tis dead, ere  
the West

Was aware of it: nay, 'tis abiding, 'tis un-  
withdrawn:

Have a care, sweet Heaven! 'Tis Dawn.

Now a dream of a flame through that dream  
of a flush is uprolled:

To the zenith ascending, a dome of undazzling gold  
 Is builded, in shape as a bee-hive, from out of the sea:  
 The hive is of gold undazzling, but oh, the Bee,  
 The star-fed Bee, the build-fire Bee,  
 Of dazzling gold is the great Sun-Bee  
 That shall flash from the hive-hole over the sea. 130

Yet now the dew-drop, now the morning gray,  
 Shall live their little lucid sober day  
 Ere with the sun their souls exhale away.  
 Now in each pettiest personal sphere of dew  
 The summ'd morn shines complete as in the blue  
 Big dew-drop of all heaven: with these lit shrines  
 O'er-silvered to the farthest sea-confines,  
 The sacramental marsh one pious plain  
 Of worship lies. Peace to the ante-reign  
 Of Mary Morning, blissful mother mild, 140  
 Mind of nought but peace, and of a child.

Not slower than Majesty moves, for a mean and a measure  
 Of motion, — not faster than dateless Olympian leisure  
 Might pace with unblown ample garments from pleasure to pleasure, —  
 The wave-serrate sea-rim sinks unjarring, unreeling,  
 Forever revealing, revealing, revealing,  
 Edgewise, bladewise, halfwise, wholewise, — 't is done!  
 Good-morrow, lord Sun!  
 With several voice, with ascription one,  
 The woods and the marsh and the sea and my soul 150  
 Unto thee, whence the glittering stream of all morrows doth roll,  
 Cry good and past-good and most heavenly morrow, lord Sun.

O Artisan born in the purple, — Workman Heat, —  
 Parter of passionate atoms that travail to meet

And be mixed in the death-cold oneness, — innermost Guest  
 At the marriage of elements, — fellow of publicans, — blest  
 King in the blouse of flame, that loiterest o'er  
 The idle skies yet laborest fast evermore, —  
 Thou, in the fine forge-thunder, thou, in the beat  
 Of the heart of a man, thou Motive, — Laborer Heat: 160  
 Yea, Artist, thou, of whose art yon sea's all news,  
 With his inshore greens and manifold mid-sea blues,  
 Pearl-glint, shell-tint, ancientest perfectest hues  
 Ever shaming the maidens, — lily and rose  
 Confess thee, and each mild flame that glows  
 In the clarified virginal bosoms of stones that shine,  
 It is thine, it is thine:

Thou chemist of storms, whether driving the winds a-swirl  
 Or a-flicker the subtler essences polar that whirl  
 In the magnet earth, — yea, thou with a storm for a heart, 170  
 Rent with debate, many-spotted with question, part  
 From part oft sundered, yet ever a globed light,  
 Yet ever the artist, ever more large and bright  
 Than the eye of a man may avail of: — manifold One,  
 I must pass from thy face, I must pass from the face of the Sun:  
 Old Want is awake and agog, every wrinkle a-frown;  
 The worker must pass to his work in the terrible town:  
 But I fear not, nay, and I fear not the thing to be done;  
 I am strong with the strength of my lord the Sun:  
 How dark, how dark soever the race that must needs be run, 180  
 I am lit with the Sun.

Oh, never the mast-high run of the seas  
 Of traffic shall hide thee,

Never the hell-colored smoke of the fac-  
tories

Hide thee,

Never the reek of the time's fen-politics

Hide thee,

And ever my heart through the night shall  
with knowledge abide thee,

And ever by day shall my spirit, as one  
that hath tried thee,

Labor, at leisure, in art, — till yonder  
beside thee

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My soul shall float, friend Sun,

The day being done.

*December, 1880.*

1882.

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# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES





# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

## WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT was born at Cummington, Mass., November 3, 1794. Of what sturdy New England stock he came may be guessed from the entry in his mother's diary (which she kept for fifty-three years without missing a day), under that date: 'Stormy wind N E — churned — unwell, seven at Night a Son Born.' Two days later the entry reads: 'Clear Wind N W — Made Austin a coat. . . .' Bryant's mother, like Longfellow's, was a descendant of John and Priscilla Alden of the Plymouth Colony. His earliest American ancestor on his father's side is said, like so many others, to have come over in the Mayflower. It is at least certain that he was at Plymouth in 1632, and he was constable of the colony in 1663. Bryant's father, his grandfather, and his grandmother's father were all New England country doctors. His father was a genial and generous man, a lover of poetry, especially that of the school of Pope. He encouraged his boy to read Pope's *Iliad*, and to act the old story over again with wooden shields and swords and mock-heroic costume; and also encouraged him in his early writing and in his later devotion to poetry, though not always in sympathy with the style and manner of his work. In all these points he reminds us of Browning's father.

Bryant began to write verses when he was eight years old. He showed similar precocity in other ways. Though he was never a strong child, yet 'On my first birthday,' he says, 'there is a record that I could already go alone, and on the 28th of March, 1796, when but a few days more than sixteen months old, there is another record that I knew all the letters of the alphabet.' He was sent to school at three years old, and could read well at four. His early verses were mostly in heroic couplets, and include school poems and versions of a part of the Book of Job and the first book of the *Æneid*, etc. They are much like the verses written in colonial days by worthy Puritan divines. Like Elizabeth Barrett, he published his first volume at the age of thirteen. This was a satire on the political events of the time, and it actually had a second edition the following year — a thing which probably has happened to no other poet when so young.

Bryant was prepared for college, as was usual in those times, by studying in the families of country ministers. From one he learned Latin, from another Greek. It took him eight months to go through the Latin grammar, the New Testament in Latin, Virgil's *Æneid*, *Eclogues*, and *Georgics*, and a volume of Cicero's orations. After a summer's work on the farm he then attacked Greek, and 'at the end of two calendar months,' according to his own testimony, 'knew the Greek Testament from end to end almost as if it had been English.' This was when he was fourteen years old. The following year he mastered his mathematics, and entered the sophomore class of Williams College at the age of fifteen.

Before he had quite completed the year at Williams, he withdrew from college, intending to prepare himself for the junior class at Yale. But when the time came for entering there in the fall, it was found that the family means would not allow Bryant to finish a college course, and he accordingly turned to the study of the law as the quickest way to prepare himself for earning a living. He passed his preliminary bar examinations in 1814, was admitted as attorney in 1816, and practised for nine years.

In the meantime 'Thanatopsis' and the 'Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood,' at first called 'A Fragment,' had been published in the *North American Review* for September, 1817. The story of how 'Thanatopsis' had been written when Bryant was only

sixteen or seventeen years old, and how his father, having received a letter asking for contributions to the *Review*, found these unfinished poems in a desk and submitted them to the editors, who were at first unable to believe that they had been written by so young a man as Bryant, or even by any one 'on this side of the Atlantic,' has often been told. (See the notes on 'Thanatopsis,' pp. 1, 2; Bigelow's *Bryant*, pp. 38-41; or Bradley's *Bryant*, pp. 27-33.) Bryant was asked to be a regular contributor to the *North American*, and his next important poem published there was the lines 'To a Waterfowl.' A collection of his *Poems* was published in September, 1821, containing eight pieces, five of which are included in the present volume. The slight success of this book, of which only 270 copies were sold in five years, showed that an audience for the best poetry had still to be created in America. Bryant's name was already known, however, as that of the most promising of the younger poets, and he had been invited to deliver the annual Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard in 1821. It was for this occasion that 'The Ages,' the longest poem in the volume of 1821, had been written.

Bryant wrote very little from the time when he was admitted to the bar, in 1816, until 1821, except the noble 'Hymn to Death,' which he took up and completed at the time when his father died, in March, 1820. Soon after this a new impulse came into his life, in his love for Miss Frances Fairchild, whom he married June 11, 1821. Of the many poems written for her at this time, Bryant preserved only one, 'O fairest of the rural maids.' Throughout his life he was very severe in his criticism of his own verses, and is said to have destroyed more than he printed.

Bryant was weary of the law (see the last stanza of 'Green River'), but the sale of his volume of *Poems* was not such as to give him hope of making a living by purely literary work. During the five years following its publication his total profit from the sale had been \$14.92. In 1825, however, after two visits to New York, he found employment there as associate editor of the *New York Review and Athenæum Magazine*, just about to be established. The first number appeared in June, 1825, and Bryant moved to New York to take up the editorial work which was to keep him there for the rest of his life. New York was then a village of 150,000 inhabitants, with the northern city limits at what is now Canal Street. The part of New York still known as Greenwich Village, south of Washington Square, was then a summer resort.

Bryant's first magazine, like so many others at that time, was not successful, and lived for only a year. At the beginning of 1826 he again took up the practice of the law for a short time. Later in the year, however, he was asked to be assistant editor of the *New York Evening Post*, and three years later became editor-in-chief. His connection with the paper as editor and part owner lasted for fifty-two years.

Bryant was so engrossed with his editorial work (for many years he kept office hours from seven in the morning till four in the afternoon), and with the many demands of life in a growing metropolitan and cosmopolitan city, that he gave little time to poetry. In 1832 he visited the West (accidentally seeing Lincoln, who was leading a company of Illinois volunteers across the prairie to the Black Hawk war), and wrote his poem 'The Prairies;' he wrote no other poem of importance for three years. A new collection of his poems had been published in 1831, both in America and in England (see the note on the 'Song of Marion's Men,' p. 17), which considerably increased his reputation. In 1834 to 1836 he took his first trip to Europe, visiting England, France, Italy, and Germany, where, at Heidelberg, he met Longfellow, then preparing himself for his professorship at Harvard.

Bryant was always fond of travelling, and visited Europe again in 1845, in 1849, in 1852-53, when he saw something of the Oriental countries also, in 1857, and again in 1858, when he met, at Rome and Florence, the Brownings, W. W. Story, Crawford, Page, Miss Hosmer (the sculptress), Frederika Bremer, Hawthorne, and Landor, whom he greatly admired; and still again in 1866. His impressions were recorded in letters to the *Evening Post*, some of which have been collected in his *Letters from a Traveller*, *Letters from the East*, and *Letters from Spain and other Countries*. He also travelled extensively in America at various times. His life, during all these years, was uneventful; the

time which he could give to writing was almost wholly filled with editorial work, and he produced only a few poems from year to year. New editions of his poems were, however, published, always with some additions, in 1834, 1836, 1842, 1844, and a collection in two volumes in 1854.

Bryant was an active worker in the formation of the Republican party in 1855. In 1859 he presided at a lecture given by Lincoln. Lincoln said: 'It was worth the journey to the East to see such a man,' and Bryant was so impressed with Lincoln's personality that he threw the whole influence of the *Post* in favor of his nomination for the Presidency in the following year, and was himself presidential elector on the Republican ticket. The *Post* was always a distinct power in national life, and especially so during the Civil War. Bryant had never been an abolitionist, but he was one of the strongest supporters of the Union, and, once the war had begun, of the policy of emancipation. His criticism of the administration was sometimes severe, especially in the matter of its greenback policy, but he retained close relations with Lincoln and was one of his most valued advisers. The struggle of these years had but few echoes in his poetry, except in two poems of 1861, 'Our Country's Call' and 'Not Yet,' and in three later poems, 'My Autumn Walk,' 'The Death of Lincoln,' and the 'Death of Slavery.' He seems rather to have sought a refuge in poetry from the strain of his daily work and the anxiety of the time. It was in 1862-63 that he wrote 'Sella' and the 'Little People of the Snow,' which have more lightness and charm than anything else in his work, and made a translation of the Fifth Book of the *Odyssey*. A collection of his later work was published in 1863, with the title *Thirty Poems*.

Already Bryant had long been recognized as the chief of our elder poets, and was called the 'Father of American Song.' This position, and still more the service which he had done and was doing as a man and a citizen, almost to the exclusion of further poetical work, were practically recognized by a meeting at the Century Club in New York, of which Bryant was for many years President. To this meeting the American republic of letters sent its best representatives, men of a generation just younger than Bryant, yet whose literary reputation was already greater than his, to do him honor on his seventieth birthday. Whittier wrote, —

Who weighs him from his life apart  
Must do his nobler nature wrong,

and

His life is now his noblest strain,  
His manhood better than his verse.

Holmes sent the finest of his many poetical tributes to contemporaries, and Lowell wrote for this occasion 'On Board the '76;' but perhaps the greatest tribute was Emerson's address. This was the culminating point in Bryant's career. He spoke of himself as 'one who has carried a lantern in the night, and who perceives that its beams are no longer visible in the glory which the morning pours around him.' It is true that Bryant is inferior to his younger contemporaries in the scope, the abundance, and the beauty of his poetical work. But he remains the pioneer of American poetry, and neither in the high nobility of his writing, nor in his dignity and his faithful work as a man, has he been surpassed.

In 1866 Mrs. Bryant died. Bryant's feeling of his loss is expressed only in the one poem 'A Life-Time.' He gave himself up during the following years to his translation of Homer. The *Iliad* was completed and published in 1870, the *Odyssey* in 1872. During the last years of his life he wrote a few poems, characterized by the same high dignity of expression which marks all his best work, and showing no loss of power. 'The Flood of Years' comes as the conclusion of his work and as a fitting pendent to 'Thanatopsis' at its commencement. This and 'A Life-Time' were the last poems he wrote.

He continued his editorial work till the last year of his life, walking daily to his office and back, a distance of three miles. Many New Yorkers still remember his impressive personality, the large, high forehead, flowing white hair, deep-set clear-seeing eyes under shaggy brows, and erect carriage. During these last years he was more and more in request as a public speaker, and was often called 'the old man eloquent.' Though he

was not an orator in the usual sense of the word, his addresses were always impressive, appropriate, and full of well-knit thought. The best have been preserved in his prose works, and deal with Fitz-Greene Halleck, Shakspeare, Scott, Burns, Franklin, Goethe, etc. His earlier addresses, especially those on Irving (1860) and Cooper (1852), must not be forgotten. When he was in his eighty-fourth year he paid a noble tribute to Mazzini in an oration at the unveiling of the statue in Central Park. He was somewhat exhausted by the effort and by the heat of the day; and on returning to the home of his friend, General Wilson, he fell at the doorstep, receiving injuries which resulted in his death, June 12, 1878.

Bryant's life extended from the administration of Washington to that of Hayes — from the first presidency until after the centennial of the country. For more than fifty years during the formative period of the nation, he was a strong though quiet influence in its development. It is therefore impossible, as it would be unjust, to 'judge him from his life apart.' A keen judge, and never too generous a critic — Edgar Allan Poe — wrote of him so early as 1846: 'In character, no man stands more loftily than Bryant. . . . His soul is charity itself, in all respects generous and noble.' It was this generous and noble character that Bryant freely gave to his times. He entered into all the life of a great material city, the centre of the country, as editor, orator, and public man. His life was too full for him to devote much of it to poetry, the most lasting part of his life-work, and to take that permanently high rank among American poets which some think he might have attained. Yet it is doubtful whether, if he had given more time to poetry, his limitations rather than his power might not have become more evident. His was not a genius of overflowing richness, of passion, of imagination. His range is narrow. But within his range he is supreme. What he gives us is the expression of simple and noble thought on life, and still more on death; and our first, and still the greatest, expression of American Nature in poetry. Whether or not he is the 'American Wordsworth' (see Lowell's *Fable for Critics*), he is the first and greatest poet of Nature in America; not of larks and nightingales and English primroses would he write, like most of the provincial poets who preceded him, but of the bobolink, and the veerie, and the fringed gentian; not of the English ponds and hills, but of the American lakes and mountains. This was America's 'Declaration of Independence' in poetry. Then too, in the highest of poetic forms in English, he is perhaps the greatest master since Milton. The blank verse of even Wordsworth, Landor, or Browning has not the power or the convoluted richness of expression through long interwoven rhythmic periods that Bryant's has. In 'Thanatopsis,' the 'Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood,' 'A Winter Piece,' the 'Hymn to Death,' 'Monument Mountain' (the best of his poems on Indian subjects), 'A Forest Hymn,' 'The Prairies,' the 'Antiquity of Freedom,' and the 'Flood of Years,' this noble rhythmic form fitly expresses the high dignity of his thought, and these together fitly represent his character and his life.

### EDGAR ALLAN POE

EDGAR ALLAN POE was born at Boston, January 19, 1809, in the same year as Holmes and Tennyson, Lincoln and Gladstone, Mendelssohn and Chopin, and Charles Darwin. On his father's side he came of a good Maryland family, going back to John Poe, who emigrated from the north of Ireland to Pennsylvania about the middle of the eighteenth century, and soon moved to Maryland. The poet's grandfather, General David Poe, was Assistant-Quartermaster-General in the Revolution, and a close friend of Lafayette's. His son, David Poe, Jr., studied law, but soon abandoned it for acting, and in 1805 married Elizabeth Arnold, who had been born and brought up to the stage. Her mother was an English actress, and she had been first married to C. D. Hopkins, a comedian, who died in 1805. It seems that David Poe proved to have little talent as an actor, and his wife, delicate, beautiful, strong-willed, and versatile, was the support of the family. They had three children, of whom Edgar was the second. The little troop wandered up and down from Maine to California, but found their best patrons and friends in Richmond.

It was at Richmond that Poe's mother died, of consumption, in December, 1811. His father had probably died some months before.

Poe was adopted by Mr. John Allan, a Scotch tobacco merchant of Richmond, not at all a rich man as has so often been stated. It is of record that he made an assignment for the benefit of creditors in 1822. In 1825, however, just before Poe left home for the University of Virginia, Mr. Allan received an inheritance from his uncle, one of the rich men of the State, which made him well-to-do. In the meantime he had attempted to extend his business to London. The most important result of this was that he took Poe to England and placed him for five years in the Manor House School, Stoke-Newington. Poe's story 'William Wilson' is full of reminiscences from this period, and much of his work is colored by it. Probably on some vacation trip to Scotland with his adopted parents he saw that lake among the hills which is the subject of one of his earliest yet most characteristic poems — one of those which he says were written before he was twelve years old : —

#### THE LAKE

In youth's spring it was my lot  
To haunt of the wide earth a spot  
The which I could not love the less ;  
So lovely was the loneliness  
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,  
And the tall pines that tower'd around.  
But when the night had thrown her pall  
Upon that spot — as upon all,  
And the wind would pass me by  
In its stilly melody,  
My infant spirit would awake  
To the terror of the lone lake.  
Yet that terror was not fright —  
But a tremulous delight,  
And a feeling undefined,  
Springing from a darken'd mind.  
Death was in the poison'd wave  
And in its gulf a fitting grave  
For him who thence could solace bring  
To his dark imagining ;  
Whose wildering thought could even make  
An Eden of that dim lake.

The poem was published in this form in his first volume, when he was eighteen years old, and was retained in every subsequent edition of his poems, in the edition of 1831 being inserted as a part of 'Tamerlane.' In the successive editions he made less changes in this than in any other of his earliest poems. The memory of a mystic lake of poisoned waves 'with black rock bound' reappears often in others of his works, until it becomes the 'dim lake of Auber' in his greatest poem. The love of loneliness and of night, the tremulous delight in terror, the thought of a darkened mind that seeks for death and finds in it an Eden, all remain characteristic of his later writing.

In 1820 the Allans returned to Richmond, and until 1825 Poe was at school there; he distinguished himself in athletics (especially swimming), in declamation, and in French. It was natural enough that his first school-boy love should be for a woman older than himself, but perhaps hardly natural that this should be the mother of one of his school-mates, and certainly not so that a healthy boy should haunt her grave for months, as is recorded of Poe ; for she died in 1824, the first of his many Helens and Lenores. Just before going away to the University he had a somewhat more normal love affair with a girl nearly two years younger than he (he was sixteen himself), a Miss Royster. They became 'engaged,' at least according to the lady's later account. Poe wrote to her from the University, but the letters were intercepted by her father, and she was soon married to a Mr. Shelton. Perhaps in this simple story is to be found the whole basis of Poe's 'Tamerlane,' almost certainly written during the following year.

The University of Virginia had been opened under Jefferson's patronage in March, 1825. Poe registered as a student there on February 14, 1826, and remained for one year. During this time he obtained distinction in Latin, French, and Italian, and was



fairly regular in his attendance, but sometimes (not habitually) drank, and gambled with passionate recklessness. His gambling debts at the end of the year are said to have been about \$2000. Mr. Allan refused to pay these debts of honor, withdrew Poe from the University, and set him to work at a desk in his own counting-room.

Poe did not submit to this employment long, but ran away, somehow reached Boston, and soon published there (1827) his first volume: *Tamerlane and Other Poems, By a Bostonian*. (See note 1 on page 36, and note 2 on page 39.) By the time the book was published, Poe, perhaps unable to find any other means of subsistence, had already (May 26, 1827) enlisted in the United States army, under the name of Edgar A. Perry. He served for nearly two years. He seems to have served faithfully; on January 1, 1829, he was promoted for merit to be Sergeant-Major. Early in 1829 Mrs. Allan died. Poe had been recalled to Richmond to see her, but arrived too late. There was, however, a partial reconciliation with Mr. Allan, who obtained a substitute for him in the army, and after some effort secured his nomination to West Point.

While waiting for this appointment he had published at Richmond (1829) *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems*. For this volume he re-wrote, condensed, and for the most part greatly improved the 'Tamerlane.' (See the notes on pages 37 and 38.) 'Al Aaraaf' is on the whole a less successful production than 'Tamerlane.' In 'Tamerlane' he had deplored the triumph of ambition over love, in 'Al Aaraaf' he seems to be celebrating the claims of beauty as superior to all others, even those of love. The poem, however, has not, as 'Tamerlane' has, any clear thread of narrative on which to string its ideas and pictures, and even these are entirely vague and almost meaningless. 'Al Aaraaf' seems to show the influence of Shelley, as 'Tamerlane' (in the first form of which there occurs, unquoted, 'A sound of revelry by night') shows that of Byron. 'Al Aaraaf' also suffers from the fact that Poe never took the time to re-write it as he did 'Tamerlane.' There is in it, however, one supremely beautiful 'Burst of Melody' (as Professor Trent has entitled it in his *Selections from Poe*), the song to Ligeia. There are also in the volume of 1829 two exquisite lyrics, both entitled 'To ———,' and an early form of the poem 'A Dream within a Dream.' When we remember that Poe was barely twenty when this volume was published, and that Keats was twenty-two when his first volume (not containing any of his greatest work except the 'Sonnet on Chapman's Homer') appeared, we feel that Lowell was almost justified in writing to Poe (May 8, 1843): 'Your early poems display a maturity which astonished me, and I recollect no individual (and I believe I have read all the poetry that ever was written) whose early poems were anything like as good.'

Poe entered West Point July 1, 1830. His work there was at first fairly good. He ranked third in French and seventeenth in mathematics, in a class of eighty-seven. Late in this year Mr. Allan married again, and Poe seems to have felt that he had no more to expect from him in the way of support or inheritance. In January of 1831 he deliberately neglected all duties at the academy for two weeks, was court-marshalled, and dismissed.

'When in doubt, publish a volume of poems,' seems, says some one, to have been the rule of Poe's life. After his dismissal from West Point, he went to New York and brought out his third volume, entitled simply *Poems*. This volume contained (and Poe was still only twenty-two years old) what is, perhaps, his most beautiful lyric, the first 'To Helen,' and the poems 'Israfel,' 'The City in the Sea,' 'The Sleeper,' 'Lenore' in its earliest form, and 'The Valley of Unrest.' His fellow cadets at West Point, to whom he dedicated the volume, and through whose subscriptions he had been enabled to publish it, were naturally disappointed at receiving such poems as these, instead of the satirical verses on their professors which they had expected.

For the next two years practically nothing is known of Poe's life. We find him in Baltimore in 1833, living with his father's sister, Mrs. Clemm. He had written six *Tales of the Folio Club*, and one of these, 'The Manuscript found in a Bottle,' won him a prize of one hundred dollars and the friendship of John P. Kennedy. The second prize of fifty dollars, offered for the best poem submitted, would have been awarded to Poe's 'Coliseum,' except that the judges felt unwilling to give both prizes to one competitor. This

success gave Poe a practical start in literature, or rather journalism, and Mr. Kennedy secured for him a position on *The Southern Literary Messenger*, published at Richmond.

Meanwhile there had come to Poe the one genuine, deep, and lasting love of his lifetime, that for his child-cousin, Virginia Clemm. A license for marriage was obtained on September 22, 1834, when Virginia was barely twelve years old. There seems to have been no marriage at this time. In any case, after Poe moved to Richmond a new license was obtained, in May, 1836, and the marriage took place, while Virginia was still only in her fourteenth year.

Poe showed great ability as an editor and journalistic writer. He made the magazine famous, and greatly increased its circulation. But he was irregular in his habits and not to be depended upon. He had not learned to master the tendency against which he later struggled — at least for many months and even years of his life — so successfully. 'No man is safe,' his employer wrote to him, 'that drinks before breakfast.' He lost his position in January, 1837, went to New York, where he published in 1838 the *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, and then to Philadelphia, where he lived for the next six years.

During these years he did a great amount of literary hack-work, and did it well, and also wrote some of his best stories and criticism. His *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* were published, in two volumes, at the end of 1839 (dated 1840). He was editor for a while of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and later of *Graham's Magazine*, two of the most important periodicals of the time. It has repeatedly been assumed that he lost his positions on both these magazines through incapacity caused by drinking, but the weight of evidence seems to disprove this. Mrs. Clemm stated positively, speaking of the period from 1837 to 1841, that 'for years I know he did not taste even a glass of wine' (Harrison's *Life of Poe*, p. 161), and this testimony is so strongly confirmed by others who knew him well during this time, that we may perhaps accept fully his own statement of the matter as made in a letter of 1841: 'At no period of my life was I ever what men call intemperate, — I never was in the habit of intoxication. . . . But, for a period, while I resided in Richmond and edited the *Messenger*, I certainly did give way, at long intervals, to the temptation held out on all sides by the spirit of Southern conviviality. My sensitive temperament could not stand an excitement which was an every-day matter to my companions, — in short it sometimes happened that I was completely intoxicated. For some days after each excess I was invariably confined to bed. But it is now quite four years since I have abandoned every kind of alcoholic drink — four years, with the exception of a single deviation. . . .'

A few facts seem now to be clearly established after the years of controversy over this disagreeable question. It is certain that Poe was not, as has so often been stated, an abandoned or habitual drunkard. It is also certain that the effect of even small quantities of alcohol was, in his case, especially severe; that he was to some extent the victim of a hereditary tendency ('There is one thing,' his cousin William Poe wrote to him, 'I am anxious to caution you against, and which has been a great enemy to our family . . . a too free use of the bottle'); and that the surroundings of his early life and the habits of the University and of West Point in those times did much to strengthen this tendency. It is also certain, and this has not been sufficiently recognized, that for many years Poe struggled manfully against this tendency, and succeeded, in spite of occasional relapses, and in the midst of all kinds of difficulties, discouragements, anxiety, poverty, and physical weakness, in doing an amount of work, and of highly intellectual work, that would have been impossible for a man so weak as he has usually been represented.

Two strong motives governed his life, so far as it could be governed: his devotion to his beautiful child-wife and to her mother, whom he calls his 'more than mother' in the beautiful sonnet which is the simple expression of his genuine feeling for her; and his passionate desire for literary fame, which, at its worst, showed itself in petty envy and carping criticism of his contemporaries, but which, at its best, became a noble devotion to the ideal of beauty.

Every point in Poe's life and character has been the subject of controversy and con-



flicting statements, except one, — the genuineness, simplicity, and, until his wife's death, constancy, of his devotion to the two women who made his home. 'I shall never forget,' wrote the owner of *Graham's Magazine*, within a year after Poe's death, when the attacks upon him were bitterest, 'how solicitous of their happiness he was. . . . His whole efforts seemed to be to procure the comfort and welfare of his home. Except for their happiness, and the natural ambition of having a magazine of his own, I never heard him deplore the want of wealth. . . . His love for his wife was a sort of rapturous worship of the spirit of beauty, which he felt was fading before his eyes. I have seen him hovering around her when she was ill, with all the fond fear and tender anxiety of a mother for her first-born, — her slightest cough causing in him a shudder, a breast chill, that was visible. I rode out one summer evening with them, and the remembrance of his watchful eyes, eagerly bent upon the slightest change of hue in that loved face, haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain.'

Virginia is described as of wonderful delicate loveliness, like that of Ligeia. She was a beautiful singer. In 1842, while singing for her husband, she broke a blood vessel in her throat, and this resulted in serious hemorrhages, which afterward recurred often, and sometimes brought her almost to the point of death. It was to Poe as if she had died many times, — as often, even, as he has expressed in his poetry that one theme which he calls the highest of all, the death of a beautiful woman.

Early in 1844 the little family moved to New York, Poe still hoping to found there a magazine of his own. For some time he worked on the staff of the *Evening Mirror*, under N. P. Willis, whose description of his faithfulness, industry, and courtesy must not be overlooked by any one trying to estimate his character during these years. 1845 was the year that gave Poe his national reputation. 'The Raven' appeared in the *Evening Mirror* on January 29, and was immediately copied by newspapers throughout the country, just as the first of Lowell's *Biglow Papers* was to be, a little more than a year later. His *Tales* were published by Wiley and Putnam, and had considerable success. He became associate-editor of the *Broadway Journal*, in which he republished, in their final perfected form, many of his earlier poems. And finally, all the poems which he wished to preserve were collected and published, toward the end of the year, in a volume entitled *The Raven and Other Poems*.

Meantime, Poe was involved in many bitter controversies, through his severe criticism of his contemporaries. The *Broadway Journal*, of which he had finally obtained exclusive control in October, 1845, failed to prove a financial success, and involved him in considerable debt; its publication had to be discontinued at the end of the year. Early in 1846 Poe moved, with his family, to the cottage at Fordham, in what is now the Borough of the Bronx, New York City. Here the little family lived through a year of wretchedness. Poe's strength, both of body and of character, was seriously impaired. Virginia's illness became more and more serious, until she died on January 30, 1847. Poe was seriously ill for a long time, but gradually recovered. It was at the end of this 'most immemorial year' that he wrote his 'Ulalume.'

In the year and a half that followed, all Poe's weaknesses were accentuated; and a new weakness, which is comprehensible, but not pleasant to contemplate, was added, in his abject appeal for the sympathy and sometimes for the hand of one woman after another. Yet his intellect and genius shone out at intervals almost more brightly than before. During this time he wrote 'Eureka' and 'The Bells,' the strange and wonderful lyric 'For Annie,' and 'Annabel Lee' — the last certainly a reminiscence of his child-wife Virginia. He became engaged to Sarah Helen Whitman, a poetess of extreme romantic temperament, his first meeting with whom is described in the second 'To Helen;' but the engagement was broken through the efforts of her friends. Her loyal defence of Poe against his critics after his death is to be remembered. Poe was in Richmond in 1848, and again in 1849, hoping to get help there for the establishment of the new magazine which he was still planning; he found there the Mrs. Shelton who, as Miss Royster, had been his first love, and who was now a widow. He became engaged to her, his friends in Richmond raised a fund to help him start anew in life, and he left Richmond on Sep-

tember 30, to return to New York and settle up his affairs. It will never be known what happened on the following days, but he was found, October 3, in the back room of a saloon in Baltimore which was being used as a polling place. It has been suggested that he was drugged by an electioneering gang and made to serve as a repeater; and also that he had been drugged by robbers, for his money was gone. He was taken to a hospital, and died there, four days later, on Sunday, October 7, without having recovered consciousness. The attending physician testified that he was not under the influence of liquor, but this does not seem to be important, though it may refute the repeated statement that his death was caused by delirium tremens.

Poe's character has often been judged harshly, but the case is one rather for human pity than for harsh judgment. His life was a tragedy, and in part a tragedy of hereditary fate, against which his human will struggled as best it could. He should be judged with the same charity which his New England contemporaries showed in their many beautiful tributes to Burns, whose life and character have points of resemblance with Poe's, though Burns's poetry is so much more human and less strange.

In many ways Poe is unique among the chief American poets : in his life, for he is the only one who lived in extreme poverty and loneliness ; the only one of weak character and ill-repute ; the only one (except Lanier) who died young. He is unique in his hatred of commonplace and of convention, in his intense devotion to poetry, in his love of mere music in verse, in his power to express emotion and his inability to express character, in his comparative blindness to Nature (except that strange unreal region of Nature which he creates for himself 'out of place, out of time'), in his exaltation of love, in his strange visionary conceptions of death. He is the only American who has been *intensely a poet*, and the only American poet (as Hawthorne is our only prose writer) who can justly be said, in any strict and narrow use of the word, to have had genius.

## RALPH WALDO EMERSON

THE story of Emerson's life, so far as its external events are related to his poetry, can be told briefly. He was the last of nine successive generations of ministers. Thomas Emerson emigrated from England to Ipswich, Mass., about 1635. At about the same time, Emerson's first American ancestor in another line, Peter Bulkeley (see the beginning of 'Hamatreya'), settled in Concord as the first minister of that parish. Emerson's grandfather, William Emerson, was minister in Concord at the beginning of the Revolution, and on April 19, 1775, urged the minute-men to stand their ground near his parsonage, the 'Old Manse.' In 1776 he left Concord to join the troops at Ticonderoga, but caught a fever on his way there, and died in the same year. Emerson's father was minister of the First Church, Boston, which had already become Unitarian.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston, May 25, 1803. His father died when he was eight years old, and the family was left in comparative poverty. Yet his mother, with devoted help from her sons, succeeded in obtaining an education for all of them. His eldest brother, William, graduated at Harvard in 1818, and studied for two years in Germany. Ralph Waldo graduated at Harvard in 1821, and his younger brothers, Edward and Charles, in 1824 and 1828.

Ralph was prepared for Harvard at the Boston Latin School, where, in his eleventh year, he made a brief verse translation from Virgil's Eclogues, which has been preserved and published. He entered college in 1817, with the appointment of 'President's Freshman,' receiving free lodging for the work of carrying official messages ; and he saved three-fourths of the cost of his board by waiting at table in the college Commons, and in the last years of his course earned something by tutoring. He did not especially distinguish himself in his studies, being generally thought the least brilliant of the brothers, but he was well liked by both teachers and students, and was elected class poet at the end of his course, as Lowell was later. He was only eighteen when he graduated, but immediately began work as a school-teacher, and when his older brother, William, went to

Germany, took charge of his school for young ladies in Boston. He wrote long after : 'I was nineteen, had grown up without sisters, and, in my solitary and secluded way of living, had no acquaintance with girls. I still recall my terrors at entering the school.' It was on the occasion of his weekly escape from these 'terrors' to his home in Roxbury, which was then the country (and not at his retirement to Concord, as has often been said), that he wrote the poem 'Good-bye, proud world.'

He soon entered the Divinity School at Harvard, where he studied under Dr. W. E. Channing and Professor Andrews Norton ; and was 'approbated to preach' in October, 1826. He had no settled parish, and had not as yet much confidence in himself, his doctrines, or his power to speak. 'Whatever Heaven has given me or withheld,' he wrote at this time, 'my feelings, or the expression of them, is very cold, my understanding and my tongue slow and ineffective.' His feelings were soon to be roused and quickened, however, and his expression vivified. In December, 1827, he was preaching at Concord, N. H., and met there Miss Ellen Tucker, then sixteen years old, to whom he became engaged just a year later. Of the beautiful lyrics written for her, one, beginning 'And Ellen, when the graybeard years,' which was written in 1829, but remained unpublished for seventy-five years, deserves to stand beside anything even of Landor's for its simplicity and condensation, and for that peculiar feeling of the eternal which a brief and perfect poem can give.

In 1829 he was appointed assistant pastor of the Hanover Street Church, Boston (the church of the Mathers). In September he was married. His wife was already frail from consumption, and she died two years later. Emerson found even the liberal doctrines and simple forms of the Unitarian Church somewhat too strict for him, and felt himself compelled, in the following year, 1832, to give up his pastorate. He still preached occasionally for a few years, but for the rest of his life the public lecture platform was his chief pulpit ; for he never ceased to be, in a way, a preacher.

In December, 1832, Emerson sailed for Europe, going by the then unusual southern route, and visited first Sicily and Italy. The fragments 'Written in Naples,' and 'Written at Rome,' are significant of his mood and thoughts at this time. The first, with its remembrance of

beauty in the fogs  
Of close low pinewoods in a river town,

foreshadows the idea which is primarily Emerson's, but for which Whittier found its most perfect expression in his

He who wanders widest, lifts  
No more of Beauty's jealous veils  
Than he who from his doorway sees  
The miracle of flowers and trees,

and reminds us that Emerson was to be the poet of 'Woodnotes,' and, after Bryant, the chief poet of Nature in America, with its own peculiar and distinctive beauties. The second, 'Written at Rome,' with its

And ever in the strife of your own thoughts  
Obey the nobler impulse ; that is Rome,

shows that Emerson was already on the track of his answer to the Sphinx's riddle.

He sought in Europe not things but men, not relics of the past but living thoughts. For him Florence seems to have meant Landor, in his villa at the foot of the Fiesolan hill. He passed through France uncomprehending, thinking it a land 'where poet never grew,' and went to visit the almost unknown Carlyle on his Scotch hillside, and Wordsworth by his English Lakes. His friendship for Carlyle lasted till the end of his life, and he did Carlyle great service in introducing his works to America, taking charge of all the material details of their publication here. He seems to have been much amused at first to see Wordsworth pause in his garden walks and stand apart to declaim his own sonnets, but on second thought recollected that that was what he had come for, and listened with reverence.

On his return, Emerson settled in Concord. He had been through his *Lehrjahre* and

*Wanderjahre*, had found his own place, intellectually and spiritually, in the universe, and had acquired confidence in his own thought and his right and power to deliver a message to the world. He now abandoned, as unimportant, the negative side of his earlier Unitarianism and of his revolt from the forms and formal beliefs even of Unitarianism itself; and insisted on what is the positive side of Unitarianism, and, more broadly, of idealistic philosophy, — the thought that every man (as well as the Christ, though not in the same degree) has in himself something of the divine, is himself a part of the 'World-Soul,' and therefore has within himself, and himself is, the measure of all things; and so can meet fearlessly all the Sphinx-riddles of the universe. The other side of this conception is his thought that all Nature is but another manifestation, or another part of the same manifestation, of the 'World-Soul;' and that Nature is thus most closely related to the central reality in man. Hardly more than this need be said, I think, in elucidation of the so-called obscure and mystic poems of Emerson, and in elementary statement of his much-discussed 'transcendentalism.'

Strong in this belief in the intellectual independence of himself and of every individual man, Emerson prepared that famous address on 'The American Scholar,' which was given before the Phi Beta Kappa of Harvard University in 1837. That and his little book called *Nature*, published in the previous year, give us the two sides of his thought just stated. In the Phi Beta Kappa address, however, he stated this thought more especially as related to the intellectual attitude of America in 1837, and as a protest against its provincialism. 'Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close . . . We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds . . . a nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Will, which also inspires all men.' This address was America's Declaration of Independence in the intellectual life. His Divinity School address, in the following year, was a spiritual declaration of independence: 'Let me admonish you, first of all, to go alone; to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred in the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil . . . Thank God for these good men, but say, "I am also a man." . . . Yourself a new-born bard of the Holy Ghost, cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint yourself at first hand with the Deity.' These two addresses aroused great opposition, but Emerson entirely disregarded it, and went quietly on his way. He seems to have regretted it only so far as he felt that opposition to him personally might injure the success in America of Carlyle's works, for which he stood sponsor.

In the years of this (as it then seemed) revolutionary thinking and speaking, Emerson was living a quiet, simple, practical life at Concord, taking his part in the affairs of the village, even accepting an election as hog-reeve of the township, delivering the Bi-Centennial Address in 1835, and writing the Hymn for the Completion of the Battle Monument in 1837. In 1834 his brother Edward died, and in 1836 his youngest brother, Charles. It was in 1838, 'at the mid-point of life's pathway,' as Dante expresses it in the first line of his *Divina Commedia*, that Emerson wrote the beautiful 'Dirge' for them: —

I reached the middle of the mount  
Up which the incarnate soul must climb,  
And paused for them, and looked around,  
With me who walked through space and time.

Five rosy boys with morning light  
Had leaped from one fair mother's arms,  
Fronted the sun with hope as bright,  
And greeted God with childhood's psalms.

The winding Concord gleamed below,  
Pouring as wide a flood  
As when my brothers, long ago,  
Came with me to the wood.

But they are gone, — the holy ones  
Who trod with me this lovely vale;  
The strong, star-bright companions  
Are silent, low, and pale.

My good, my noble, in their prime,  
 Who made this world the feast it was,  
 Who learned with me the lore of time,  
 Who loved this dwelling-place !

They took this valley for their toy,  
 They played with it in every mood ;  
 A cell for prayer, a hall for joy, —  
 They treated Nature as they would.

They colored the horizon round ;  
 Stars flamed and faded as they bade,  
 All echoes hearkened for their sound, —  
 They made the woodlands glad or mad.

I touch this flower of silken leaf,  
 Which once our childhood knew ;  
 Its soft leaves wound me with a grief  
 Whose balsam never grew.

From this time on, Emerson's life was diversified only by home joys and sorrows. He married in 1835 Miss Lidian Jackson of Plymouth. In October, 1836, was born the beautiful boy who died in January, 1842, the 'wondrous child' of his 'Threnody.' Some of his most important poems were published in the *Dial* in 1840 and 1841, and he was editor of that short-lived transcendentalist magazine from 1842 to 1844. The first series of his *Essays* was published in 1841, the second in 1844, the second edition of *Nature* in 1849, *Representative Men* in 1850, and *English Traits* in 1856. He had taken a second brief trip to Europe in 1847-48. The only important collections of his verse during his lifetime were the *Poems* of 1846 (dated 1847), *May Day and Other Pieces*, 1867, and a selection in the *Little Classics* edition, 1876, including a few poems not previously collected. The editions of the *Poems*, 1883, and 1904 (*Centenary Edition*), both contain very important additions. His lecture field was extended in 1843 to New York and Philadelphia, in 1847-48 to England and Scotland, in 1854 to the States of the new Northwest, Michigan and Wisconsin, in 1862 to Washington, where Lincoln attended his lecture on 'American Civilization.' From 1854 to 1868 he gave many lecture courses in the West, and in 1871 went as far as the Pacific coast, but the larger part of his lectures were still given in New England, especially at Boston and Concord. In 1870 he gave a regular course in the Graduate School of Harvard, then just established. During these years his life in Concord was enriched by the friendships with Thoreau, Alcott, and Ellery Channing, as well as by his acquaintance in Boston and Cambridge with Longfellow, Agassiz, Holmes, and Lowell; he and Hawthorne were good neighbors, but never intimate friends. Concord became a shrine of pilgrimage, and many of the best and ablest minds of the time, as well as many unbalanced and vague idealists, made themselves, like Lowell, Emerson's faithful 'liegemen.'

Emerson always refused to be drawn into the anti-slavery contest as an active worker. He gives his reasons in full in the 'Ode to W. H. Channing.' He advocated the purchase of the slaves, for two billion dollars, — less than the war ultimately cost, in mere money expenditure, to the North alone. But though he did not identify himself with the abolitionists, he never hesitated on occasion to express his views clearly. His first speech on American Slavery was given at Concord in 1837, and his address on Emancipation in 1844; he voted with the Free-Soil party in 1850, joined in the mistaken opposition to Webster in 1851, denounced the Fugitive Slave Law and the assault on Charles Sumner, and took part in the memorial service for John Brown of Ossawatimie. In January, 1861, with Wendell Phillips, he was mobbed at the Tremont Temple in Boston. During the war he was a strong advocate of unconditional emancipation. But that he did wisely in keeping for the most part to 'his chosen work,' was proved by the outcome. His political idealism, his belief in man, which finds its perfect expression in the famous quatrain of 'Voluntaries,' became a pervading influence. To this influence, more than to anything else, said Lowell, 'the young martyrs of our Civil War owe the astounding strength of thoughtful heroism that is so touching in every record of their lives.' It was Emerson who was chosen



to give the address at the Harvard Commemoration for which Lowell's great Ode was written.

The last ten years of Emerson's life were somewhat clouded by a gradual failure of his mental powers, especially of the memory, but he was always, as Whitman has described him in his reminiscences, beautiful in old age. Holmes tells us of the last time he saw Emerson, at Longfellow's funeral, in 1882. Twice he rose, and looked intently on the face of the dead poet, and the last time turned and said to a friend near him, 'That gentleman was a sweet, beautiful soul, but I have entirely forgotten his name.' Emerson died just a month after Longfellow, April 24, 1882.

'I am born a poet,' wrote Emerson in 1835; 'of a low class, without doubt, yet a poet. That is my nature and vocation. My singing, to be sure, is very husky, and is for the most part in prose. Still, I am a poet in the sense of a perceiver and true lover of the harmonies that are in the soul and in matter, and specially of the correspondences between these and those.' At other times, Emerson said of himself, 'I am *not* a great poet.' On the other hand, Mr. Stedman calls him 'our most typical and inspiring poet.' It has often been said that he could not write poetry at all, and as often replied that he could write nothing else. Of course the question is largely one of definitions. Emerson's own dictum, 'The great poets are judged by the frame of mind they induce,' which has often been quoted in settlement of the question, is too vague to be of any real help. It would apply equally well as a standard for the judgment of great prose writers, or great orators. Confusion arises on the one hand from identifying poetry with whatever is noble and imaginative in thought or feeling, and on the other hand, from narrowing it to the mere singing faculty. The lyric is only one of the many poetic forms; and the lyric element in poetry is only one of its important elements. In the nineteenth century, to be sure, the lyric almost usurped to itself the whole domain and conception of poetry. But this error can be only a passing one. What lasts from century to century in poetry is even more often those words or phrases which condense thought or feeling or vision into simple and well-shaped rhythmic form, than the verse that merely appeals to the senses with easy-flowing or even haunting melody. We may even admit that Emerson was not a born singer, — many of the greatest poets have not been, in the narrow lyric sense of the word, — and still maintain, without falling into the opposite error of identifying poetry with that nobility of thought and originality of imagination which are merely possible material for poetry, that he was a born poet. For he proved himself a poet in the form as well as in the substance of his work. That he did not altogether lack the lyric note, the 'Earth Song' in 'Hamatreya,' a few passages in 'Woodnotes' and 'May Day,' and many stanzas of 'My Garden,' of 'Waldeinsamkeit,' and of the 'Concord Ode,' at once show. But, what is far more important, he has in a supreme degree the faculty of fitting thought to the *form* of verse rather than merely to its melody. Many a line, many a quatrain, many brief passages, and a few complete poems, stand, and are beginning more and more to stand out, in Emerson's work, like those lines of which Holmes said that a moment after they were written it seemed 'as if they had been carved on marble for a thousand years.'

## HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW was born at Portland, Maine, February 27, 1807, the second of eight children. He came of an old New England family. His father and his great-grandfather were graduates of Harvard College. On his mother's side he was descended from John and Priscilla Alden of Plymouth, and his maternal grandfather, General Peleg Wadsworth, was a distinguished officer in the Revolution. He spent a happy boyhood in Portland, the memory of which returns often in his poems, especially in 'My Lost Youth.' The first book that he remembered with delight was Irving's *Sketch Book*, which he read in numbers when it appeared. His first published verses, the 'Battle of Lovell's Pond,' were printed in the *Portland Gazette* when he was thirteen years old.

It might have been expected that he would go to Harvard College, as his father had

done. But his father was now a trustee of Bowdoin, the chief college of Maine, which had only recently been set apart from Massachusetts as a separate state. Longfellow entered the sophomore class at Bowdoin in 1822, and graduated in 1825, ranking second in his class. Hawthorne was in the same class; and Franklin Pierce, later President of the United States, and Hawthorne's close friend, was in the next preceding class.

In his last year at college, when the question of choosing a career in life became pressing, Longfellow wrote to his father (December 5, 1824): 'I take this early opportunity to write to you, because I wish to know fully your inclination with regard to the profession I am to pursue when I leave college. For my part, I have already hinted to you what would best please me. I want to spend one year at Cambridge for the purpose of reading history, and of becoming familiar with the best authors in polite literature; whilst at the same time I can be acquiring a knowledge of the Italian language, without an acquaintance with which I shall be shut out from one of the most beautiful departments of letters. The French I mean to understand pretty thoroughly before I leave college. After leaving Cambridge, I would attach myself to some literary periodical publication, by which I could maintain myself and still enjoy the advantages of reading. Now, I do not think that there is anything visionary or chimerical in my plan thus far. The fact is — and I will not disguise it in the least, for I think I ought not — the fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centres in it. There may be something visionary in *this*, but I flatter myself that I have prudence enough to keep my enthusiasm from defeating its object by too great haste. Surely, there never was a better opportunity offered for the exertion of literary talent in our own country than is now offered. To be sure, most of our literary men thus far have not been professedly so, until they have studied and entered the practice of Theology, Law, or Medicine. But this is evidently lost time. . . . Whether Nature has given me any capacity for knowledge or not, she has at any rate given me a very strong predilection for literary pursuits, and I am almost confident in believing, that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talent in the wide field of literature. With such a belief, I must say that I am unwilling to engage in the study of the law.'

On the last day of the year he wrote again: 'I am very desirous to hear your opinion of my project of residing a year at Cambridge. Even if it should be found necessary for me to study a profession, I should think a twelve-months' residence at Harvard before commencing the study would be exceedingly useful. Of divinity, medicine, and law, I should choose the last. Whatever I do study ought to be engaged in with all my soul, — for I *will be eminent* in something. The question then is, whether I could engage in the law with all that eagerness which in these times is necessary to success. I fear that I could not. . . . Let me then reside one year at Cambridge; let me study belles-lettres; and after that time it will not require a spirit of prophecy to predict with some degree of certainty what kind of a figure I could make in the literary world.' His father answered: 'A literary life, to one who has the means of support, must be very pleasant. But there is not enough wealth in this country to afford encouragement and patronage to merely literary men. And as you have not had the fortune (I will not say whether good or ill) to be born rich, you must adopt a profession which will afford you subsistence as well as reputation. I am happy to observe that my ambition has never been to accumulate wealth for my children, but to cultivate their minds in the best possible manner, and to imbue them with correct moral, political, and religious principles, — believing that a person thus educated will with proper diligence be certain of attaining all the wealth which is necessary to happiness. With regard to your spending a year at Cambridge, I have always thought it might be beneficial; and if my health should not be impaired and my finances should allow, I should be very happy to gratify you.' The letter goes on with a kindly criticism of some verses by Longfellow which had just been published.

Longfellow regretfully accepted his father's decision, choosing, among the three possible professions, the law. 'I can be a lawyer,' he says. 'This will support my real existence, literature my *ideal* one.' Just at the right moment, however, there came an



apparent solution of the difficulty in the shape of an offer from the trustees of Bowdoin to establish for Longfellow a professorship of modern languages, on condition that he should spend some time in Europe preparing for the position. His father provided the necessary money for foreign travel and study. The season of the year was not favorable for sailing, so it was not until the following May (1826), that he began the long voyage from New York to Havre. Meanwhile he spent some time in reading law in his father's office, and more in writing verses, some of which were printed in the *Atlantic Souvenir* of Philadelphia, and others in the *United States Literary Gazette* of Boston, to which he had already contributed during his last year in college. A few of these pieces were preserved in the section entitled 'Earlier Poems' of Longfellow's first volume of original verse, published fourteen years later.

On arriving in Europe, in June, 1826, he went first to Paris, and spent about eight months there; then to Spain (where he met Washington Irving), for nearly a year; then to Italy for almost another year (1828); and to Germany for his last six months, returning home in August, 1829. He had acquired a good practical knowledge of French, Spanish, and Italian, but had found German more difficult, and made comparatively little progress in it.

Longfellow entered on his work as a teacher of modern languages and literatures in September, 1829. The idea that study of the modern languages could form any serious part of a college curriculum was at that time a new one. Only one important professorship in the subject existed. There were not even any elementary text-books for English speaking students, and Longfellow had to begin by making his own. He published a translation of L'Homond's French Grammar; an elementary reading book in French, called *Manuel de Proverbes Dramatiques*; and a similar book for Spanish; he wrote in French a syllabus of the elements of Italian grammar, and edited a collection of extracts from Italian writers, writing his preface in Italian. He attended carefully and thoroughly to his work, hearing recitations, composing and correcting exercises, etc., and found time to write, outside of his text-books, only a few articles for the *North American Review*, dealing in elementary fashion with the French, Italian, and Spanish languages and literatures. He found the profession which he had chosen no less exacting than the law would have been, and almost more so; since, by employing him on work closely similar in kind to that which he most desired to do, it left him little freshness of mind for original composition. His work was well and faithfully done, however; he had the respect and liking of his students; and in 1834 the most important position within the field of his chosen work was offered to him, the 'Smith Professorship of the French and Spanish Languages and Literatures and of Belles Lettres,' at Harvard, previously held, since its foundation in 1816, by Ticknor. With the offer came a suggestion from the President of the University: 'Should it be your wish, previously to entering upon the duties of the office, to reside in Europe, at your own expense, a year or eighteen months, for the purpose of a more perfect attainment of the German, Mr. Ticknor will retain his office till your return.'

Longfellow eagerly accepted this offer. He had been married in 1831 to Mary Potter of Portland, and they sailed for Europe in April, 1835. They went first to England, then to Holland, where Mrs. Longfellow fell ill, and died in November. Longfellow was more than most men one for whom it was 'not good that he should be alone.' The rest of his year in Europe was spent in the shadow of sorrow and loneliness. He studied faithfully, mastered the German language, and buried himself in the reading of the modern German romantic literature, the influence of which is so strong in his prose romance, *Hyperion*. This romance was in part inspired by Miss Frances Appleton, whom he met the following summer in Switzerland, and who appears in it as Mary Ashburton.

On his return to America in the autumn (1836), he entered on the duties of his professorship at Harvard. He had somewhat less of routine work to do than at Bowdoin, and more lecturing. He had one assistant for each of the foreign languages taught, but still retained personal oversight of the work of each student, and often was confined to his classroom

work for three whole days in each week. He now formed broader and richer friendships than he had known before, particularly with Charles Sumner, then teaching in the Harvard Law School, with C. C. Felton, professor of Greek, and later President, with George S. Hillard, and others; and renewed his college friendship with Hawthorne. He had grown with the experiences of life, and now found the mechanical duties which filled so much of his time more irksome than before. 'Perhaps the worst thing in college life,' he wrote in his *Journal*, 'is this having your mind constantly a playmate for boys, constantly adapting itself to them, instead of stretching out and grappling with *men's* minds;' and again: 'Lecturing is all well enough, and in my history is an evident advance upon the past. But now one of my French teachers is gone, and this dragooning of schoolboys in lessons is like going backward.' On the whole, however, he believed in his work: 'Have I been wise to give up three whole days (in the week) to college classes? I think I have; for thus I make my presence felt here, and have no idle time to mope and grieve;' and again: 'After all Cambridge delighteth my heart exceedingly. I have fallen upon books with a most voracious appetite; . . . no doubt, if I could bring myself to give up all my time to the college . . . I could get along very comfortably, but the idea of standing still or going backward is not to be entertained.' Constantly the memory of his early ambitions, and of how little he has done to achieve them, returns to him: 'I could live very happily here if I could chain myself down to college duties and be nothing but a professor. I should then have work enough, and recreation enough. But I am too restless for this. What should I be at fifty? A fat mill-horse, grinding round with blinkers on. . . . This will not do. It is too much for one's daily bread when one can live on so little.'

These extracts are from his *Journal* of 1838-39; and it is in these same years that he is writing the few brief and simple poems that are the real beginning of his poetical work: the 'Psalm of Life,' the 'Light of Stars,' the 'Hymn to the Night,' 'Footsteps of Angels,' and the 'Beleaguered City.' These five poems and four others almost equally well known, with seven 'Earlier Poems,' were collected and published in a slender volume called *Voices of the Night*, in 1839. *Hyperion* was published in the same year. Two years later he published another small collection entitled *Ballads and Other Poems*, containing the 'Skeleton in Armor,' the 'Wreck of the Hesperus,' the 'Village Blacksmith,' 'Endymion,' the 'Rainy Day,' 'Maidenhood,' and 'Excelsior.' In 1842 the 'Spanish Student' appeared, as a serial, in *Graham's Magazine*.

Longfellow was now thirty-five years old. His health was somewhat impaired by his years of close work, and he found himself compelled to take a half-year's leave of absence, which he spent mostly at Marienberg, in Germany. Here began his lasting friendship with Freiligrath, who later translated 'Hiawatha.' On his way home he passed through England, met Landor and Dickens, read Dickens's *American Notes*, and was particularly impressed with 'the grand chapter on slavery,' as he calls it. During the return voyage, being confined to his cabin for about a fortnight, he wrote the seven brief *Poems on Slavery*. These, with one additional poem, were published in a little volume of thirty-one pages, in December, 1842, and were hailed with delight by the abolitionists, who felt that a very strong ally had joined their forces. Longfellow, however, declined to accept the congressional nomination which was offered him through Whittier by the Liberty party, or to take any further part in the anti-slavery contest. He even omitted the poems on slavery from the first collected edition of his poems, an act for which he has been severely blamed. Yet even Lowell, ardent abolitionist as he was at the time, and uncompromising as he was on the question of omitting any of his own anti-slavery poems, felt that Longfellow was justified in doing so, since he might well consider these poems to be the least valuable part of his work. It is probable, also, that the gentle Longfellow, who did not lack courage, but who did lack 'the fighting edge,' omitted the poems rather from a genuine desire to avoid wounding any of his readers than from mere policy. In any case, the poems are unimportant. 'I have attempted only to invest the subject with a poetic coloring,' wrote Longfellow to John Forster; and that is all he succeeded in doing; many will say, with a false poetic coloring. The *Poems on Slavery* have none of the deep

conviction and intensity of Whittier's or Lowell's, and are more closely related to German literary romanticism than to American social conditions.

Longfellow had not even yet 'found himself,' and had barely begun, in a few ballads, his real poetical work. He had written in his *Journal* in 1840, speaking of a visit to Mr. Norton: 'There I beheld what perfect happiness may exist on this earth, and felt how I stood alone in life, cut off for a while from those dearest sympathies for which I long.' It was at Marienberg that he wrote the sonnet 'Mezzo Cammin,' oppressed with a feeling that, though he was the author of a few brief and popular poems, yet he had spent half of man's allotted years without having begun that 'tower of song with lofty parapet,' which it had been his ambition to build. He was almost entirely dependent upon home life and home affection; and when he at last found these, in his marriage with Miss Frances Appleton, in 1843, his maturity and the creative period of his life really began. He finished his work as a mere editor and compiler (except for the *Poems of Places*, much later) with the '*Poets and Poetry of Europe*,' in 1845. At the end of that year was published the *Belfry of Bruges and Other Poems*, dated 1846, which closes the first period of his work, and already shows a great advance in artistic quality over the crude moralizing and vaguely romantic commonplace of his earliest work. The first collected edition of his poems had been published in a sumptuous volume by Carey and Hart of Philadelphia, in 1845, and 'Evangeline' was just begun.

The characteristics of all Longfellow's work, which are especially marked in its first period, are not such as appeal either to the intellectual critic or to the lover of art for art's sake. A good deal of its romantic imagery strikes us now as false, and its simplicity as bathos. 'Excelsior' is a truly imaginative conception, but in expression it degenerates into 'A tear stood in his bright blue eye. But still he answered with a sigh,' etc. The expression is truly imaginative in that French passage from which he took the idea of the 'Old Clock on the Stairs,' yet Longfellow makes of it such lines as 'Some are married, some are dead,' which is almost as bad as the line that Tennyson declared to be typical Wordsworthian blank verse, 'A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman.' But it is the very triumph of these early poems that most of their lines seem more commonplace than they really are, because they have become, by their simplicity and genuineness, a part of the universal feeling of the race. Simple and genuine they are, except for the false romantic imagery already spoken of, such as is found in the 'Reaper and the Flowers.' Their appeal is universal; and to each individual it may at some time be new, as it was to all the young America of 1840. Even in our sophisticated times, it would be a pretty poor sort of youth who would not still be thrilled at his first reading of the 'Psalm of Life.' 'The Day is Done,' hackneyed as it is, is still full of simple and restful beauty.

On the last day of 1845, Longfellow wrote in his *Journal*: 'Peace to the embers of burnt-out things; fears, anxieties, doubts, all gone! I see them now as a thin blue smoke, hanging in the bright heaven of the past year, vanishing away into utter nothingness. Not many hopes deceived, not many illusions scattered, not many anticipations disappointed; but love fulfilled, the heart comforted, the soul enriched with affection!' The first period of his life and writing was in fact finished, and his next fifteen years were to contain the largest and the most important part of his poetical work. In the earlier period he had been growing, experimenting, preluding; in the third and last period, which was to follow 1861, he touched deeper notes sometimes, and attained to greater artistic beauty and condensation; but he produced no such large body of lasting work as in the middle period.

This middle period, from the end of 1845 to the beginning of 1861, contains 'Evangeline' (1847); 'Hiawatha' (1855); the 'Courtship of Miles Standish' (1858); the 'Building of the Ship,' and other poems, especially of the home, in *The Seaside and the Fireside* (dated 1850, published 1849); the *Golden Legend* (1851); the 'Saga of King Olaf' and others of the best *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, not published until later; 'My Lost Youth'; the 'Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz'; and some of Longfellow's most beautiful poems of childhood, including 'Children,' and 'The Children's Hour.' Longfellow's own home was made complete in these years by the coming of his five children, three girls and two boys,

and his outside life was broadened by his growing friendship with Agassiz, Lowell, and Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, and by his continued close relations with Sumner. The duties of his professorship, however, were becoming more and more irksome to him. 'What vexes me most,' he wrote in 1847, 'is being cribbed and shut up in college, not that I dislike work, but that I have other work to do than this;' and again later: 'I seem to be quite banished from all literary work save that of my professorship. . . . I am tired, not of work, but of the sameness of work . . . these hours in the lecture-room, like a schoolmaster! It is pleasant enough when the mind gets engaged in it, — but "art is long and life is short."'" In 1853 he wrote nothing except the brief poem to Lowell, 'The Two Angels.' In 1854, realizing that his means were quite adequate for his support without a college salary, — they had been so since his second marriage, — he finally decided to resign his professorship and devote himself entirely to literature. The next few years were full of work. 'Hiawatha' was written immediately after his retirement from the professorship, the *Courtship of Miles Standish and other Poems* was published in 1858, and in the next three years were written many of his best shorter poems and some of the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

Longfellow had his greatest success as a narrative poet. For the average reader 'the tale's the thing,' and Longfellow possessed the surprisingly rare faculty of telling a simple story well. For him too the tale was the thing; he realized by instinct the simple and essential first point that it must be constantly interesting, and he had the faculty of making it so. In local flavor and truth of detail his work is vastly inferior to Whittier's. Some score of years after he wrote the 'Wreck of the Hesperus,' he still vaguely wondered just where the Reef of Norman's Woe might be, though it was not fifteen miles from his own summer home. He knew the country of 'Hiawatha' only through books, and for 'Evangeline' he formed his ideas of the Mississippi from reading (perhaps mostly in Chateaubriand), and from a pictorial diorama which was exhibited at Boston while he was writing the poem, and which he enthusiastically welcomed as a great help. Yet his narrative, as such, is better even than Whittier's, whether in the ringing ballads of the Northland, from the 'Skeleton in Armor' to the 'Saga of King Olaf,' or in the gentler, easily flowing tales that are more characteristic of his own mood, from 'Evangeline' to 'King Robert of Sicily' or the 'Birds of Killingworth.' And in 'Hiawatha,' by some wondrous alchemy due to the true simplicity of his own mind, he did catch the true local color, even in detail as well as in mood, of a life that he had never seen. 'Hiawatha' has worn surprisingly well, and has stood the test of being judged even by the people whose life and legends it describes. It stands out, more and more, as Longfellow's most important work. This is anything but the fate predicted for it by those intellectual critics who (with the exception of Emerson) judged it so severely at its first appearance. In the 'Courtship of Miles Standish,' Longfellow was dealing with a life that he knew more intimately, by its partial survival and by its traditions living all about him, as well as from books; though he did not take the trouble to visit Plymouth until the poem had been completed. His treatment of this theme is entirely happy and true. The 'Golden Legend' is naturally much less so, though it is by far the best part of the ambitious trilogy which he planned, under the title of *Christus: a Mystery*. It has charm and the glamour of mediæval story, but Longfellow was manifestly unfitted for any real dramatic composition, or for the broad picturing of a great period like the Middle Ages.

In 1861 came the tragic break in Longfellow's life. It was in July. Mrs. Longfellow's light summer dress caught fire, and she was so severely burned that she died the next morning. Longfellow also was seriously burned in trying to smother the flames, and could not leave his room on the day of her funeral, — the anniversary of their wedding day.

The story of his next few years is completely told in the first of the 'Divina Commedia' sonnets. That of the later years is suggested in the 'Cross of Snow.' 'I have taken refuge in this translation of the Divina Commedia,' he wrote to his friend Freiligrath. For a while he wrote little else, except to complete and publish, at the end of 1863, the first part of *Tales of a Wayside Inn*; the second and third parts were published in



1872 and 1873. The two *New England Tragedies*, the first of which had been written in 1856-57, were published in 1868, the *Divine Tragedy* was written and published in 1871, and the completed *Christus* in 1872. He wrote 'Morituri Salutamus,' for the fiftieth anniversary of his college class, and this was published in 1875, in the *Masque of Pandora and Other Poems*, together with the 'Hanging of the Crane,' which was written for Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and which holds a peculiar place in Longfellow's work, as summing up within itself so many of the different aspects of home life, of all of which he was the poet laureate.

During this last period of his life, he wrote often in a form which he had hardly more than once or twice tried before, except for translations, — the sonnet. In much of the work of this period, especially the sonnets, his feeling is deeper and stronger (it could not be truer), and his expression richer and more condensed, than before. Longfellow was always a true artist and careful of the form of his work, as few of our American poets, except Poe, have been. The little lyric 'Sea-Weed,' of an earlier period, shows how carefully and well he could fit the form of his idea to a somewhat intricate stanza. But his art was never rich or varied, and he lacked most of all that tenseness of expression which is the mark of any very strong artistic or imaginative feeling for language. In the sonnets, however, his feeling, now deepened and strengthened by the experiences of his constantly growing life, and by his communion with Dante, was confined within the narrow walls of a form that did not allow it to flow out thin over the marshes of the commonplace, as it had so often done before, and as it did still in the 'Hanging of the Crane.' There is much of this same strength and condensation in his noble 'Morituri Salutamus.'

Longfellow's last years were made happier by the devotion of his own children, and by the love of all children who knew him — and it would seem that few in America, or even in England or Germany, did not know him. The story of his gift from the Cambridge schoolchildren on his seventy-second birthday, and of their constant visits to his home, is too well known to be repeated. His seventy-fifth birthday was celebrated in the schools throughout the United States, and was made memorable also by Whittier's poem, 'The Poet and the Children.' He died not quite a month later, March 24, 1882.

Longfellow's life was that of a simple, faithful, true man and gentleman, kindly and home-loving. And that is what he has put into his verse. He has been well called 'the laureate of the common human heart.' He is first and most of all the poet of the home. There is not an aspect of home life that he has not touched and beautified. If much of his poetry is mere commonplace, it is always the making beautiful of the commonplace. Bryant's poetry often — as in the well-known lines from 'The Battle-Field,' — and Emerson's still oftener, are the making noble of the commonplace. Whittier's is the simple and true rendering of it. Whitman's is the apotheosis of it. Poe is the only one of our chief elder poets who is not commonplace, who detests and despises the commonplace.

Next, Longfellow is the only American who has successfully written poems of any considerable length. The long poem is different from the short poem, as the novel is from the short story, not only in quantity, but in kind. For those who can conceive only that kind or class of poetry which finds fit expression in the short poem, Poe's dictum that 'there is no such thing as a long poem' is true; for the poem which by its nature belongs to the short poem class, yet tries to extend itself to greater length, is, as Poe saw, inevitably a failure. The long poem is an entirely different literary class or genre. It is Longfellow's distinctive glory that he had the patience and the sustained artistic power to win success in this difficult form, — a kind of success which is almost the rarest in literature, and second only to success in the true dramatic presentation of character and life. Without comparing Longfellow's achievement in this field with that of greater foreign poets, we may say that it alone would give him an unanswerable claim to the largest space in any fully representative collection of our chief American poets.

## JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

WHITTIER is the poet of New England country life, almost as truly and fully as Burns is of the country life of Scotland. For this he was fitted by all the circumstances of his own life. He was born and bred a farmer's boy, on the same farm which his first American ancestor, Thomas Whittier, had taken up and cleared in 1647, and in the very house which this Thomas Whittier had built for himself in 1688. This sturdy pioneer came to New England in 1638, when he was eighteen years old, and so was nearly seventy when he built the house which was to be Whittier's birthplace. Of his ten children, five were boys, and each of the five boys, like his father, was over six feet tall, and strong correspondingly. The youngest son, Joseph, Whittier's great-grandfather, had nine children, of whom the youngest, Whittier's grandfather, married Sarah Greenleaf, and had eleven children, of whom the youngest but one was Whittier's father. There was naturally but little property to divide among so many children, and the older sons usually went out and made their own way in the world, while the farm was left to the youngest — in the last case, to the two youngest, Whittier's father and his uncle, Moses Whittier, who is one of the family group in 'Snow-Bound.'

John Greenleaf Whittier was born December 17, 1807. He lived and worked on the farm, but he lacked the sturdy strength of his ancestors, and the hard work, done when a mere boy, resulted in physical injury and weakness which lasted for the rest of his life. His education was that of a typical country boy in those days; he attended the district school in the outskirts of the town where he lived, and later earned for himself two short terms at the neighboring academy. Only once in his boyhood did he go so far away from home as to visit Boston. Thus, in ancestry and training, Whittier differs from the other New England poets, who were all college bred, and spent their youth in a city or an academic town. One other important point is to be noted, — that Whittier's family were devout Quakers.

Books were naturally scarce in the household, except for the Bible and the lives of Quaker worthies. He read all the poetry he could get hold of, from the dry 'Davideis' spoken of in 'Snow-Bound' to something of Gray and Cowper. He wrote rhymes on his slate after the 'nightly chores' were done. But his real awakening to poetry came through Burns, as he has told us so vividly and beautifully in his tribute to the Scotch peasant-poet.

Whittier's first printed verses appeared when he was eighteen years old, in the local newspaper, edited by William Lloyd Garrison, then only twenty. Garrison at once sought out his new contributor, and urged the necessity of further education and cultivation of his talent. 'Sir,' replied Whittier's father, 'poetry will not give him bread.' Whittier, however, earned enough by shoemaking to support himself for one term at Haverhill Academy in 1827, and by school-teaching enough for another term in 1828. During these two years he wrote for the local papers, especially the *Haverhill Gazette*, something like a hundred poems.

A college education seemed out of the question, but Whittier obtained employment in the following winter as hack editor of a Boston trade journal, the *American Manufacturer*. The following summer his father fell seriously ill, and he had to return home and take charge of the farm. But here he found an opportunity for continuing his other work, in the editorship of the chief local paper, the *Haverhill Gazette*. His father died in June, 1830. In July he went to Hartford, Conn., to be editor of the *New England Review*, and continued to conduct it until the end of 1831, although he was compelled to spend a good deal of that year at home in Haverhill, and ultimately to give up his editorial position, on account of serious illness.

In these excursions into the outside world, at Boston, and particularly at Hartford, which was then somewhat of a literary centre, and where he held an important position, Whittier's outlook had of course been greatly broadened, and his literary ambition strengthened. His letters at the time show a strong desire and even hope of winning

fame as a poet. His editorial work had also drawn him into politics, and when he returned to Haverhill, in spite of his ill health, he took an important practical part in the local contests. In September, 1832, he wrote : ' Even if my health was restored, I should not leave this place. I have too many friends around me, and my prospects are too good to be sacrificed for any uncertainty.' The prospect which he was unwilling to sacrifice was that of being elected to Congress in the following year. It appears that he could probably have been elected in 1832, but he was not yet of the required age.

Both his literary and political ambitions, however, seemed to be once for all sacrificed when, almost by a sort of religious conversion, he devoted himself to the abolition cause. The abolitionists were at that time a small and persecuted band, despised by all ' respectable ' people in church, state, or university, and generally looked on much as an avowed anarchist is now. They were, in fact, setting themselves in opposition to what was then the law of the land, and to what seemed, to Northerners as well as Southerners, part of the very basis of its social and economic system. Whittier had far more common sense and balance than most of the abolitionists in 1833. ' He counted the cost with Quaker coolness of judgment,' says Pickard. ' before taking a step that closed to him the gates of both political and literary preferment. He realized more fully than did most of the early abolitionists that the institution of slavery would not fall at the first blast of their horns. When he decided to enter upon this contest, he understood that his cherished ambitions must be laid aside, and that an entire change in his plans was involved. He took the step deliberately and after serious consideration.' What induced Whittier to take this step, even while realizing its cost so clearly, was an intense idealistic belief, a belief amounting almost to religious fervor, in the principle of universal liberty and equality. Late in life, giving counsel to a boy of fifteen, Whittier said, ' My lad, if thou wouldest win success, join thyself to some unpopular but noble cause.'

This is not the place to give any extended account of Whittier's work in the abolition movement. It has been treated with admirable completeness and fairness in Professor Carpenter's *Whittier*. Strange as this seems to us now, Whittier was, aside from his poetry, one of the most able workers in practical politics on the abolition side. He held together a small band of followers in his own congressional district, and kept the balance of power in such a way as often to force anti-slavery declarations from any candidate who wished to be elected. He had taken no part in founding the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1832; but in 1833 he was a delegate from Massachusetts to the Convention at Philadelphia which founded the American Anti-Slavery Society. (See note on page 260.) He later became somewhat estranged from the purely idealistic faction of the abolitionists, led by Garrison, who refused to have anything to do with a government based, as it seemed to them, on false principles, or even to vote under it, and who advocated immediate dissolution of the Union in order to break away from the slave power. Whittier was elected as representative to the Massachusetts Legislature in 1835, and again in 1836, but could not serve his second term on account of ill health, and was unable, for the same reason, to take office himself at any subsequent time. He still continued to play an active part in politics, however, even to the end of his life. He is described in a letter quoted by Professor Carpenter, as ' one of the greatest workers, politically, even, in all our State. I sometimes wonder how so fine a mind can stoop to such drudgery. But Whittier has as much benevolence as he has ideality. He knows the drudgery must be done, and, since no one else does it, will do it himself. May Heaven bless him.' Whittier was largely instrumental in securing the nomination of Charles Sumner to the Senate, and in persuading him to accept the nomination. His correspondence with Sumner, from 1840 on, is very important for the history of that period. Toward the end of Sumner's life, when he had been censured by the Massachusetts Legislature for advocating the proposal that the names of battles fought against fellow-citizens should no longer be inscribed on regimental flags, it was Whittier who aroused public opinion to compel the repeal of this vote of censure. In 1834 Whittier was instrumental in bringing the English abolitionist, George Thompson, to New England, and this caused bitter personal opposition. He accompanied Thompson to New Hampshire, and at Concord they



were stoned and shot at by a mob, and barely escaped. Whittier went to Philadelphia in 1838, to edit the *Pennsylvania Freeman*; Pennsylvania Hall, where he had his office, was burned by a mob without interference from the authorities. He took part, from 1835 to 1850, in the editing of several anti-slavery papers, and in many anti-slavery conventions.

During all this time, he was a great influence by his poetry also. The ringing lines of 'Expostulation,' and of 'Massachusetts to Virginia,' were declaimed again and again through the North and West. The anti-slavery movement rapidly grew, and won the allegiance of men like Dr. Channing in 1836, and Lowell in 1841. But it was still the unpopular cause, and abolitionists were mobbed in Massachusetts as late as 1861.

Whittier's anti-slavery poems form the larger part of his work for all this period. His earliest volumes were almost entirely made up of them, — the *Poems*, of 1837, the *Ballads*, *Anti-Slavery Poems*, etc., of 1838, and the *Voices of Freedom*, of 1841. Of course little of this verse can survive, except for its historic interest. Sometimes, however, though local and temporary in its origin, it expresses something universal and eternal, as with the idea of freedom in 'Expostulation,' of truth and honor and the shame of their betrayal, in 'Ichabod,' of loathing at the triumph of wrong, in 'The Christian Slave' and 'The Rendition.' 'Massachusetts to Virginia' is one of the greatest of 'poems of places,' making the very rocks arise and speak.

In the meantime, Whittier was writing other poems, more enduring than the mass of his anti-slavery work. The *Lays of my Home* was published in 1843, the first collected edition of his *Poems* in 1849, *Songs of Labor* in 1850, the *Chapel of the Hermits and Other Poems* in 1853, the 'blue and gold' edition of his *Poetical Works* in 1857. Except for the publication of his works, there is little to note in his life-story. He had given up the farm, and moved to a little house in the near-by village of Amesbury, where he lived until 1876. His income was very small, until after the publication of 'Snow-Bound,' in 1866, for in the earlier years he could necessarily earn but little by his writings. 'For twenty years,' he said, 'I was shut out from the favor of booksellers and magazine editors; but I was enabled, by rigid economy, to live in spite of them, and to see the end of the institution that proscribed me.' 'Snow-Bound,' and all his later works, brought him large profits.

During the war Whittier wrote little. His feeling is expressed intensely in 'The Waiting' and 'The Watchers,' and he wrote the best ballad of the war in 'Barbara Frietchie.' He hailed the coming of emancipation in 'Laus Deo' and the 'Emancipation Hymn.' In 1866 came 'Snow-Bound,' in 1867 the 'Tent on the Beach,' in 1869 'Among the Hills,' in 1870 the *Ballads of New England*. These are his most important volumes, and mark his late maturity as a poet, which came only with his freedom from the partisan struggle that had filled the best years of his life.

Hater of din and riot  
He lived in days unquiet;  
And lover of all beauty,  
Trode the hard ways of duty,

he says truly of himself in 'An Autograph;' while in his Prelude to the 'Tent on the Beach,' he expresses more fully this feeling of what his life had been: —

And one there was, a dreamer born,  
Who, with a mission to fulfil,  
Had left the Muses' haunts to turn  
The crank of an opinion-mill,  
Making his rustic reed of song  
A weapon in the war with wrong,  
Yoking his fancy to the breaking-plough  
That beam-deep turned the soil for truth to spring and grow.

Too quiet seemed the man to ride  
The winged Hippogriff Reform;  
Was his a voice from side to side  
To pierce the tumult of the storm?  
A silent, shy, peace-loving man,  
He seemed no fiery partisan

To hold his way against the public frown,  
The ban of Church and State, the fierce mob's hounding down.

For while he wrought with strenuous will  
The work his hands had found to do,  
He heard the fitful music still  
Of winds that out of dream-land blew.  
The din about him could not drown  
What the strange voices whispered down ;  
Along his task-field weird processions swept,  
The visionary pomp of stately phantoms stepped.

The common air was thick with dreams, —  
He told them to the toiling crowd ;  
Such music as the woods and streams  
Sang in his ear he sang aloud ;  
In still, shut bays, on windy capes,  
He heard the call of beckoning shapes,  
And, as the gray old shadows prompted him,  
To homely moulds of rhyme he shaped their legends grim.

Whittier never married. 'Circumstances,' he wrote, — 'the care of an aged mother, and the duty owed to a sister in delicate health for many years, must be my excuse for living the lonely life which has called out thy pity. . . . I have learned to look into happiness through the eyes of others.' Still more cogent reasons for not marrying were his comparative poverty, his ill health, and especially the strong feeling of the Quakers that it was not permissible to marry out of their own sect. There are beautiful memories of his school-boy loves in poems like 'My Playmate,' 'Benedicite,' 'A Sea Dream,' 'Memories,' and 'In School-Days,' and these poems of dim and delicate reminiscence, untouched by the realities of life, sometimes seem more beautiful than any songs of living passion. His home, for many years, was made by his younger sister, Elizabeth, until her death, in 1864 ; then by his niece, Elizabeth Whittier, till her marriage, in 1876. After this he lived most of the time with three sisters, his cousins, at Oak Knoll, Danvers. His faculties remained unimpaired to the last, and he died at the age of eighty-four, September 7, 1892.

Whittier was primarily the poet of abolition ; but enough has already been said on that part of his work. Next, he was the poet of Nature in New England. His poems of the Merrimac Valley, of Lake Winnepesaukee and the mountains near it, of Hampton Beach and the Marblehead coast, are unsurpassed in simple truth and love. But most of all he is the poet of country life in New England. This means more than at first appears, for it was from these New England homes that the larger number and the more energetic of the young men, like the older brothers of Whittier's father and grandfather, went out to take and make the great Northwest and then the greater West ; moreover Whittier, in speaking for his own section, often expresses what the whole of America is and means as contrasted with the Old World, — in 'The Last Walk in Autumn,' for instance. There are two or three other points to be noted in summary. One is the simple beauty, truth, and modesty of Whittier's own nature, constantly and unconsciously showing itself in his many personal poems, and in his modest estimate of his own work, as in the 'Proem.' Another is that he ranks as our truest, though not our greatest, narrative poet. This has already been touched on in speaking of Longfellow ; as a writer of ballads, Whittier surpasses Longfellow in everything except that which is after all the first essential, but only one essential, — spirited movement. And finally, he is our chief religious poet.

## OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

HOLMES was a great believer in ancestry, and very proud of his own. Through his mother he was connected with the Phillipses, and was a cousin of Wendell Phillips ; with the Bradstreets, and was a direct descendant of Anne Bradstreet, the first American poetess ; with the Quincys, and was the great-grandson of 'Dorothy Q. ;' with the Hancocks, one of whom had married the second Dorothy Quincy, niece of the first ; and with the Wen-

dells, one of the old Dutch families who came to America about 1646. He was named for his maternal grandfather, the Honorable Oliver Wendell. On the other side of the family his great-great-grandfather, John Holmes, of Puritan stock, settled in Woodstock, Conn., in 1686. His grandfather, David Holmes, the 'Deacon' who built the 'One-Hoss Shay,' was a captain in the French and Indian wars, and surgeon in the Revolutionary army. His father, Rev. Abiel Holmes, graduated at Yale in 1782, preached in Georgia for six years, and then came to settle in Cambridge, Mass., where for forty years he was pastor of the First Church. He was also an author and lecturer, and wrote the *Annals of America*, the first important history after the Revolution. He lived in the 'house with the gambrel-roof,' which stood near the site of the present Harvard Gymnasium, and which is so often alluded to in Holmes's writings and so lovingly described in the *Poet at the Breakfast Table*. Here Holmes was born, almost under the shadow of the elms in the Harvard College yard, August 29, 1809. He went to school first in Cambridge, then at Phillips Academy, Andover. While at the Academy, he made a translation in heroic couplets of the first book of Virgil's *Æneid*. He entered Harvard with the 'famous class of '29' (see notes on 'The Boys,' pages 374, 375). Beside his own classmates who later became illustrious, he knew in college Charles Sumner, of the class of 1830, and Wendell Phillips and John Lothrop Motley, of 1831.

After graduation he spent a year in the Law School, and published during this year more than a score of poems, many of them in a college periodical, the *Collegian*. Most of these were humorous skits, but there ring out among them the thrilling lines of 'Old Ironsides.' Thus from the beginning, as throughout his life, love of fun and love of country were two chief elements in Holmes's poetry. At the end of the year he abandoned the law and took up the study of medicine. From 1833 to 1835 he spent a little more than two years in study abroad, mostly at Paris, and came back to take his degree at the Harvard Medical School in 1836. At the same Commencement he read his Phi Beta Kappa poem: 'Poetry; A Metrical Essay.' This was published later in the year, with other poems, among them the 'Last Leaf,' which had already appeared in a miscellaneous collection, the *Harbinger*, in 1833. We may say that he 'commenced' doctor and poet at the same time; and his profession and his poetry were to be the two chief interests of his life, neither ever crowding out the other.

During the following years he published or edited a number of important medical books, was professor of anatomy at Dartmouth College for a short time, settled in Boston in 1840 to the practice of his profession, and was married in that year to Miss Amelia Lee Jackson. In 1846 he published his second volume of collected *Poems*, and in 1847 was appointed professor of anatomy and physiology at Harvard, a position which he held as an active teacher until 1882, and as professor emeritus until his death, in 1894, in all forty-seven years.

Like the other New England poets, Holmes came rather late to his maturity as a writer. It was not until he began the *Breakfast Table* series, on which, even more than on his verse, will depend his ultimate fame, that he began also to write his best poetry. 'The Chambered Nautilus,' the 'One-Hoss Shay,' 'Latter-Day Warnings,' 'Contentment,' 'Parson Turell's Legacy,' 'The Living Temple,' 'The Voiceless,' all appeared first with the *Autocrat* papers (1857-58). Among these are two of his best humorous narratives, and two of his best serious lyrics. In the *Professor at the Breakfast Table* (1859) appeared 'The Boys,' 'Under the Violets,' and Holmes's two best hymns. The Civil War period called out some of his strongest verse, notably 'Union and Liberty,' 'The Voyage of the Good Ship Union,' and the poem on Bryant's seventieth birthday. Meanwhile he had begun that series of poems for his class reunions, in which there is not a break for thirty-nine years, and which thus forms one of the largest and most characteristic sections of his work. Occasional poetry is usually doomed to sure and quick oblivion. Holmes had the rare faculty of giving it a touch of greater vitality, while at the same time fitting it closely to the occasion. Class loyalty, and college loyalty, and the lasting reality of men's friendships, are not merely local and occasional things. Holmes has expressed these in his class poems, and in others like 'At a Meeting of Friends,' and 'At the Saturday Club,' and in his trib-

utes to his fellow poets. In these and others of his occasional poems (the 'Voyage of the Good Ship Union' is one of the class poems) he has expressed also the broader loyalty of patriotism, both local and national. And in his later class poems the charm of mellow, genial, and youthful old age has found unique expression.

There is little further to be said of the external facts of Holmes's life, or of his work. This is not the place to speak of his novels and other prose work, or of how he gave to the *Atlantic Monthly* its name and its character. Lowell was willing to accept the editorship only on condition that Holmes should be a constant contributor, and later he said: 'You see the Doctor is like a bright mountain stream that has been dammed up among the hills, and is waiting for an outlet into the Atlantic.' His later volumes of verse were published, *Songs in Many Keys* in 1861, *Humorous Poems* in 1865, *Songs of Many Seasons* in 1874, *Bunker Hill Battle, etc.* in 1875, *The Iron Gate, etc.* in 1880, *Before the Curfew* in 1888. He died October 7, 1894, the oldest, and the 'last survivor,' of our elder poets.

If Whittier is the poet of a single section, New England, Holmes is the poet of a single city, Boston. It is a pity that he, instead of Emerson, did not write the quatrain

What care though rival cities soar  
Along the stormy coast,  
Penn's town, New York, and Baltimore,  
If Boston knew the most?

Holmes would have written it better, and with some peculiar quaint touch of his own humor. He makes one of his characters in the *Autocrat* say: 'Boston State House is the hub of the Solar System. You could n't pry that out of a Boston man if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar.' He says it in satire, but he has a subtle feeling that it is true. On the whole his verse, however, is to a less degree merely local in flavor than his prose.

Holmes seldom strikes the deeper notes or touches on the higher themes of poetry, except that of patriotism. He is one of the chief poets of friendship and loyalty, as we have seen, but he expresses friendship rather in its social aspect, and chooses only to suggest its deeper feelings. So always, it is his own choice to touch but lightly on the surface of things. But if he is not among the great poets, he is among the rare. It is even one of the rarest things to make real poetry out of mere wit and humor, as he has so often done. In his humorous narratives, from the 'One-Hoss Shay' to the 'Broomstick Train,' and perhaps most of all in 'How the Old Horse won the Bet,' his verse sparkles and crackles in every line. And he has written two lyrics that are sure to live, the one serious, and the other so interwoven of fun and pathos that we shall never know whether it be serious or not: the 'Chambered Nautilus,' and the 'Last Leaf.'

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL was born February 22, 1819, in Cambridge, at 'Elmwood,' the house which he occupied during so large a part of his life. The Lowells were an old New England family, going back, in Massachusetts Colony, to 1639. The poet's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were graduates of Harvard College. It was John Lowell, his grandfather, who as a member of the Constitutional Convention of Massachusetts in 1780 introduced into the Bill of Rights of the State a clause abolishing slavery — 'a good sort of grandfather for the author of the *Biglow Papers*,' as Dr. Edward Everett Hale says. The great-grandfather was a clergyman, the grandfather a lawyer, and the father again a clergyman, pastor of the First Church in Boston. The family had always been distinguished for ability and public spirit. An uncle of the poet, Francis Cabot Lowell, was one of the first successful manufacturers of New England, and for him the city of Lowell was named. Another uncle, John Lowell, Jr., founded the Lowell Institute in Boston.

Lowell's mother was of Orkney descent. Both her father, Keith Spence, and her mother's father, Robert Traill, were New England merchants who had come from the

Orkney Islands. Her mother's mother, Mary Whipple, was, however, of New England ancestry. Mary Whipple's father, William Whipple, was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and her mother belonged to another old New England family, the Cutts, going back to the first half of the seventeenth century in New England.

James Russell Lowell was the youngest of six brothers and sisters. His home training, as in the case of Holmes, was that of a scholarly minister's family, illuminated in his case by his mother's strong imaginative temperament and skill in music. As a child, he was read to sleep from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. He was surrounded by books and by nature (Elmwood being then at a considerable distance from other houses, among the woods and meadows), and from the first he showed an almost passionate love of both.

After fitting for college in a Cambridge school, he entered Harvard in 1834, and had among his teachers there C. C. Felton, professor of Greek and later president of the college (celebrated by Longfellow in 'Three Friends of Mine'), Benjamin Peirce, the mathematician of Holmes's 'famous Class of '29,' George Ticknor, Longfellow's predecessor in the Smith professorship of Belles Lettres, and, in the last half of his course, Longfellow himself. Lowell read in college, he tells us, 'almost everything except the text-books prescribed by the faculty.' He had already devoured Scott's novels before entering college. Now he read Dante, Tasso, Montaigne, the old English dramatists, Butler, Cowper, Burns, Landor, Byron, Coleridge, Keats, Carlyle, and Milton, and, under the impulse of his study of Milton, something of the classics. As Dr. Hale tells us in his reminiscences, the college boys of those days were passionately devoted to literature, and Lowell's knowledge and ability made him a leader among them. He was an editor of *Harvardiana*, and was elected class poet. During his senior year he became so much more devoted to reading than to studying, and so regardless of prescribed exercises, including chapel, that he was suspended 'on account of continued neglect of his college duties,' as it was expressed in the vote of the faculty; and was rusticated at Concord, where he lived and studied in the household of the Rev. Barzillai Frost. During this rustication he perhaps found models both for the Rev. Homer Wilbur and for Hosea Biglow.

In any case, he met Emerson, and 'walked and talked with him, but at first was influenced more toward opposition than toward discipleship. In his class poem, which he was not allowed to deliver, but which he printed for distribution among his classmates, he ridiculed the transcendentalists and the abolitionists, and, in a mild way, Emerson himself. He loyally sent a copy of the poem to Emerson, with a note excusing himself for these liberties, but stoutly maintaining his own opinions. Emerson's influence gradually 'struck in,' however, and Lowell became, though not a disciple, an ardent admirer. Late in life he signed himself Emerson's 'liegeman,' and said that he for one must 'Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime.' We also find the anti-slavery feeling growing in him during this same year, and beginning to dominate his thought at least a year before he first met Miss Maria White, to whose influence it has usually been attributed. 'The abolitionists,' he wrote in November, 1838, 'are the only ones with whom I sympathize of the present extant parties.'

He had been allowed to return to Cambridge just in time to graduate with his class in 1838. Not knowing what else to do, he, like Holmes, began the study of the law, and graduated from the Law School in 1840. During these two years he continued his eager reading, and now paid much more attention to the classics than he had done in college when they were prescribed subjects. Ovid, Theocritus, and the Greek dramatists seem to have been his favorites. In August, 1840, he graduated from the Law School, and became engaged to Miss Maria White, whom he had met late in the previous year. He entered a law office in Boston, but spent most of his time in reading and in writing verse, and seems never to have had, on his own account, that 'First Client' whose imaginary existence offered the material of his later humorous sketch. Late in this year (1840) he published his first book of verse, *A Year's Life*, dated 1841; and in 1841-1842 he published many



poems and essays in the magazines of the time. Among his poems of this period are the beautiful lyrics, 'My Love,' 'Irene,' and the song 'O Moonlight deep and tender;' and in many of the sonnets there is a personal sincerity and a fineness of poetic quality to be found in few other American sonnets. These poems express his feeling for Miss White, whose influence upon him was strong and always ideal. It was partly through her influence, and partly through his own natural development, that Lowell had now openly joined forces with the extreme abolitionists, at a time when abolition seemed mere quixotism, was despised by almost all conservative people, even in New England, and shut out its devotees from the social circles to which Lowell was born, and from many of the most important literary magazines and publishing houses.

At the end of 1842 Lowell entirely gave up the law, and with Robert Carter attempted to start a new magazine, *The Pioneer*. This was not a success financially, and left Lowell considerably in debt by its failure after the third number had been published. The list of contributors to the three numbers which did appear included most of the chief contemporary writers, — Hawthorne, Whittier, Poe, W. W. Story, Thomas William Parsons, and Lowell. Lowell was in New York during the winter of 1842-43, and made many acquaintances and friends among the men of letters there. He published a new volume of *Poems* in December, 1843 (dated 1844), which contained 'Rhœcus,' 'An Incident in a Railroad Car,' 'The Shepherd of King Admetus,' the 'Stanzas on Freedom,' etc. A year later, in December, 1844, he published *Conversations on Some of the Old Poets*. Both these volumes were republished in London, and they brought Lowell considerable reputation in England and in America.

Lowell was married to Miss White in December, 1844, and for some months after his marriage lived in Philadelphia, where he was employed as editorial writer on the *Pennsylvania Freeman* at the munificent salary of ten dollars a month. In May, 1845, he returned to Elmwood, where he lived until his first trip to Europe, in 1851. These were the busiest and poetically the most productive years of his life, and they were years full of both joy and sorrow in his home life, and of growing friendships with his chief contemporaries, most of them, like Holmes and Longfellow, his elders by ten years or more. His first child, Blanche, was born December 31, 1845, and died March 19, 1847. The second daughter, Mabel, was born September 9, 1847. Lowell is not so popular a poet of the home as Longfellow, but in 'The First Snowfall,' 'The Changeling,' 'She Came and Went,' 'I thought our love at full, but I did err,' and later, in 'After the Burial,' 'The Dead House,' 'The Wind-Harp,' and 'Auf Wiedersehen,' he has written poems of home joys and sorrows that have a deeper and more intimate appeal.

The year 1848 has been called by Lowell's latest biographer his 'annus mirabilis.' Just at the end of 1847 appeared his *Poems, Second Series* (dated 1848), containing the noble poem 'Columbus;' the characteristic 'Indian Summer Reverie;' 'The Present Crisis,' as strong and as universal in its truth as the very best of Whittier's work; 'To the Dandelion;' and other important short poems. In 1848 were published the *Biglow Papers, First Series*, the *Fable for Critics*, and the *Vision of Sir Launfal*, besides some forty articles and poems in various periodicals. From 1846 to 1850 Lowell was a regular contributor to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. In July, 1851, he sailed for Europe, spent nearly a year in Italy, and returned home through Switzerland, Germany, France, and England, having for companions on the return voyage Thackeray and Clough. The journey had been undertaken partly on account of Mrs. Lowell's health, but she continued to fail, and died October 21, 1853.

Holmes had given his lectures on the English Poets of the Nineteenth Century at the Lowell Institute in 1853. In the winter of 1854-55 Lowell gave there a general course on poetry, which marked the beginning of his mature criticism, and which seems to have impressed its hearers as the best lecture-course ever given at this famous Institute. Three weeks after the beginning of the course he was appointed to the Smith Professorship at Harvard (which Longfellow had just resigned), with a year's leave of absence for study and travel abroad. He held this professorship, except for an interval of two years, until his appointment as Minister to Spain in 1877. Since Lowell's resignation of it no

appointment has been made, and it remains distinguished by the names of its three holders, Ticknor, Longfellow, Lowell.

During his year of preparation Lowell went to Paris (and to Chartres, where he received the impressions out of which grew his poem 'The Cathedral'); then to London, where he visited Thackeray and Leigh Hunt; then to Dresden for the winter, where he attended lectures at the University. There is something pathetic — or even tragic — in the idea of putting the poet to school again after he has reached middle age, to make of him a professor! — even so distinguished a professor as Lowell was. In the spring he escaped for another visit to Italy, and returned to America in August.

He taught regularly from 1856 to 1872, giving courses on Dante, German Literature, Spanish Literature (especially Don Quixote), and later on old French; and public lectures on English Poetry and Belles Lettres. He was not so faithful a routine teacher as Longfellow, but many students have borne witness to the inspiration received from him. He was not of course a scholar in the narrow modern sense of the word, except to a certain extent in old French; but he was an omnivorous reader, and his general knowledge of literature was probably not surpassed in breadth or intimacy by that of any teacher in his time.

Lowell was the first editor-in-chief of the *Atlantic Monthly* from its foundation in 1857 until 1861. From 1864 to 1872 he was editor, with his close friend, Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, of the *North American Review*. Leaving out of account the second series of the *Biglow Papers*, all of which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1862 to 1866, his contributions to both of these reviews were much more important in prose than in verse. During the first part of the period, his articles dealt particularly with public affairs, and were notable for his strong support of Lincoln. (See note on page 490.) In the later part of the period appeared some of Lowell's best literary essays, which were collected in *Among My Books* (1870), *My Study Windows* (1871), and *Among My Books, Second Series* (1876). In 1869 was published *Under the Willows and Other Poems*, and in 1870 *The Cathedral*.

In 1872, Lowell asked the Harvard authorities for leave of absence with half pay, which is now granted to most college professors every seventh year. After his sixteen years of continuous teaching, however, this was refused him, and he resigned his position. The years 1872-74 he spent in Europe, mostly at Paris, Rome, and Florence. While in England he received the degrees of D. C. L. from Oxford and LL. D. from Cambridge. On his return in 1874 he again took up his professorship.

Lowell's poems of the war period, even if we were to leave out of account the second series of the *Biglow Papers*, which stand by themselves and are incomparable, must still be considered more important than those of any other poet except Whitman. They include 'The Washers of the Shroud' (1861), the memorial poem to Robert Gould Shaw (1864), 'On Board the '76' (1865), and culminate in the 'Commemoration Ode,' which seems by almost universal consent to be ranked as the greatest single poem yet written in America. Lowell had the right to speak as he did in these poems and in the *Biglow Papers*. He had not, like Longfellow and Holmes, any son of his own to send to the war (though it is certain that if there had been a son in Lowell's family, he would have gone), but his nephews, 'the hope of our race,' as he calls them, whom he loved almost as if they were his own sons, — three as noble young men as fought on either side, — all won their death-wounds in battle. Lowell's 'Commemoration Ode,' the *Biglow Papers*, and the *Three Memorial Poems*, make him unquestionably our greatest poet of patriotism.

Yet, when he was aroused to bitter denunciation of the corruption in public life revealed under Grant's administration, and in his 'Agassiz' wrote a few stinging lines about the spectacle which 'The land of honest Abraham' (or, as he first wrote it, the 'land of broken promise') was then offering to the world, he naturally received a storm of abuse from the party press of the time. His sufficient answer was the three memorial poems of 1875 and 1876. In his Epistle to George William Curtis, written in 1874, but not published till 1888, he answered for himself more directly: —

Was I too bitter? Who his phrase can choose  
That sees the life-blood of his dearest come?



I loved my Country so as only they  
 Who love a mother fit to die for may ;  
 I loved her old renown, her stainless fame, —  
 What better proof than that I loathed her shame ?

Lowell was delegate to the Republican Convention, and presidential elector, in 1876. In 1877 he was appointed Minister to Spain, where he at once won the sympathies of the Spanish people. His coming was looked on as a revival of the days when Irving was minister. Among other honors, he received that of an election to the Spanish Academy. In January, 1880, he was transferred to London, the most important post in the American diplomatic service. Here he was equally successful in his larger field. He did more than any other minister has done to interpret to England the character and the strength of America, and to lay the foundations of that friendship, based on mutual respect, which has since been built up between the two chief branches of the English-speaking race. It has been said that he was the most popular man in England. Certainly no one was more in demand on every public occasion, especially where speech-making was in order. Lowell's speeches were clever, witty, always fitted to the occasion, and, wherever this was appropriate, were weighty and important ; and they were almost as numerous as the days of the year. In these speeches he was always, on occasion, strongly American and strongly democratic. There is no better exposition of the American idea than his address on 'Democracy' at Manchester. And he conducted public affairs with absolute firmness, never yielding anything so far as America was in the right. 'With all his grace,' it has been well said, 'there was a plainness of purpose that could not be mistaken.' Yet during his mission, and after his return to America, he was again bitterly assailed by the partisan press, who blamed him for his very success and for the respect which he had won. Because he was a gentleman and a man of the world, and had conducted affairs with courtesy as well as firmness, he was accused of being un-American, and of toadying to the British nobility. Nothing could be more unjust or farther from the truth. It was precisely because he was always and strongly American that he won the respect of the English. In many other Americans of culture, as for instance Washington Irving and Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, they had thought they found simply Englishmen transferred to an unfortunate environment and making the best of it. Lowell compelled them to feel that he was always, as one of them has expressed it, 'a scrappy Yankee,' and a typical Yankee. It was Lowell's great service to prove that a thoroughly typical American could be also a thorough gentleman, a man of broad culture, and, in every best sense, a man of the world.

He returned to America in 1885. Shortly before his return the second Mrs. Lowell died. He had married, in September, 1857, the sister of a close friend of his first wife, who had been chosen by her to care for her only daughter. He came back to find many of his best friends gone, — among them Longfellow and Emerson, — but younger friends still remained to him, like George William Curtis, Mr. Norton, and Mr. Howells. He wrote in the 'Postscript' (1887) of his 'Epistle to George William Curtis:' —

Home am I come : not, as I hoped might be,  
 To the old haunts, too full of ghosts for me,  
 But to the olden dreams that time endears,  
 And the loved books that younger grow with years ;  
 To country rambles, timing with my tread  
 Some happier verse that carols in my head,  
 Yet all with sense of something vainly missed,  
 Of something lost, but when I never wist.  
 How empty seems to me the populous street,  
 One figure gone I dally loved to meet, —  
 The clear, sweet singer with the crown of snow  
 Not whiter than the thoughts that housed below !  
 And, ah, what absence feel I at my side,  
 Like Dante when he missed his laurelled guide,  
 What sense of diminution in the air  
 Once so inspiring, Emerson not there !  
 But life is sweet, though all that makes it sweet  
 Lessen like sound of friends' departing feet,  
 And Death is beautiful as feet of friend

Coming with welcome at our journey's end;  
 For me Fate gave, whate'er she else denied,  
 A nature sloping to the southern side;  
 I thank her for it, though when clouds arise  
 Such natures double-darken gloomy skies.

Little I ask of Fate; will she refuse  
 Some days of reconciliation with the Muse?  
 I take my reed again and blow it free  
 Of dusty silence, murmuring, 'Sing to me!'

These lines describe his last years. He returned to poetry; he completed his 'Eudymion,' which has in it a quality rare in Lowell's work, the poetic suggestion of more than is expressed; and he wrote some exquisite lyrics, with a lightness of touch he had not possessed before, and some poems full of his best strength, like those on 'Turner's Old Téméraire' and on Grant. His last years gave us also important addresses like those on 'The Independent in Politics,' and 'Our Literature,' and charming essays like that on 'Izaak Walton.' He died at Elmwood, August 12, 1891.

Lowell is the largest and best rounded personality that our literature yet possesses. He has unquestionably written our best literary essays, and perhaps also our best political essays in literary form. In his poetry he has all but surpassed the other poets, each in his own field. He is as true a nature poet as Bryant; though he has nothing to compare with the higher ranges of Bryant's nature poetry, like the 'Forest Hymn,' yet his treatment of Nature in her gentler aspects can well meet the comparison. 'To a Dandelion,' for instance, may be set beside 'To the Fringed Gentian.' What is more important, he writes of Nature with a happy intimacy which Bryant never had, as in the 'Indian Summer Reverie' and 'Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line,' and in many of the essays, like 'My Garden Acquaintance' and 'A Good Word for Winter.' There is a personal genuineness in his early work, especially the sonnets, which we do not find elsewhere except in Longfellow or Whittier, and in them it hardly has Lowell's deeper poetic quality; while in his later work, there is a high dignity which we do not find elsewhere except in Bryant. He is a true poet of New England country life, once at least, in 'The Courtin',' surpassing Whittier in his own field. He has written poems of sincere thought, though without the condensation and the fitness of form of Emerson at his best, in 'Bibliolatres,' 'The Lesson,' 'Masaccio,' 'The Miner,' 'Turner's Old Téméraire,' etc.; and these poems are somewhat more human in quality than Emerson's. He is our greatest humorist; the *Biglow Papers* have far broader and more significant power than the best of Holmes's humor, and the 'Fable for Critics' is almost as sparkling as the best wit of Holmes. If he is not a greater poet of occasions than Holmes, he is certainly a poet of greater occasions, and adequate to them. He has a lightness of touch in familiar verse that no one of our greater poets had (though it is to be found in Thomas Bailey Aldrich and others), as in 'Hebe,' 'The Pregnant Comment,' 'An Ember Picture' and 'Telepathy.' Yet there is something lacking in most of his work, something of charm, especially of rhythmic charm, something of poetic suggestiveness, something which he seems always striving after (see 'L'Envoi to the Muse,' 'Auspex,' and 'The Secret'), and which now and then he does almost attain, as in 'In the Twilight.' He lacks, usually, just that last touch of genius, that 'St. Elmo's Fire' playing over all, which he so well describes in his own essay on Keats. His life and character possessed something of this charm which did not quite get expression in his verse. He had a genius for friendship; he was one of the best talkers, and by far the best letter-writer, we have had; and we feel that uncaptured charm hovering near some of his poems of personal moods, like 'My Study Fire,' 'To Charles Eliot Norton,' or the 'Envoi to the Muse' and the others just mentioned. In personality, he was the fine flower of American society. Noble and varied as his verse is, he lived out his own motto, —

The Epic of a man rehearse,  
 Be something better than thy verse.

He is our noblest patriot-poet, and our most complete and well-rounded man.

## WALT WHITMAN

WHITMAN, like Holmes, was of combined Connecticut and Dutch ancestry. His immediate ancestors, like Whittier's, were farmers, but more prosperous, his father owning five hundred acres of good land on Long Island, which Whitman preferred to call by its Indian name of Paumanok. His mother's family were also prosperous farmers. On his father's side, the first American ancestor, Rev. Zachariah Whitman, came to this country in 1635 and settled at Milford, Conn. In the last part of the seventeenth century Long Island was settled, largely from Connecticut, and the son of Rev. Zachariah Whitman crossed the Sound with the others. At about the same time Whitman's ancestors on his mother's side, a family of Dutch origin, the Van Velsors, settled in Long Island a little further to the west, nearer New York. There was also Quaker blood in Whitman's veins, coming from his maternal grandmother.

Whitman's father, Walter Whitman, was a carpenter and builder as well as a farmer, and lived at Huntington, Long Island. There Walt Whitman was born, May 31, 1819, the second of nine children. He was christened Walter, but to distinguish him from his father was called Walt, and he kept this name throughout his life. When he was four years old the family moved to Brooklyn, and there Walt attended the public schools. He was still almost as much a country as a city boy, however. He tells of his expeditions with his comrades on the ice of the Long Island bays in the winter, and of his own walks on the bare shores of Coney Island in summer, which then, he says, 'I had all to myself.' These expeditions to deserted Coney Island lasted until he was more than thirty years old, and he tells how, in its solitudes, he 'loved after bathing to race up and down the hard sand, and declaim Homer and Shakspeare to the surf and sea-gulls by the hour.' In 1833-34 he was in printing offices in Brooklyn, learning the trade, and until 1837 worked as compositor in Brooklyn and New York. For the following year or two he taught school in country towns on Long Island, and 'boarded round.' 'This,' he says, 'I consider one of my best experiences and deepest lessons in human nature behind the scenes and in the masses.' In the following year (1839-40), he started and published a weekly paper in his native town, probably doing both the writing and the typesetting himself. 'All these years,' he says, 'I was down Long Island more or less every summer, now east, now west, sometimes months at a stretch.' For the five years following 1840, all the time, and off and on for the next fifteen years, he lived winters in Brooklyn, working more or less as a compositor in New York city. He tells how his life was 'curiously identified with Fulton Ferry' (see the passage quoted in full in the note on 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry'), how he crossed almost daily, often in the pilot-house, familiar with all the pilots, as he was in New York with all the omnibus drivers, with whom he spent many hours riding the length of Broadway. He passionately loved the great city and its sights and its people, and no one has given so vivid a picture of it either in verse or in prose. He had a passion for music also, spent night after night at the opera, and went much to the theatre. In 1848-49 he was editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*. He had written more or less since 1839 for newspapers and magazines, among others the *Democratic Review*. A few specimens of this early writing, both in prose and verse, are preserved in his *Complete Prose Works* (pages 334-374). The 'Dough-Face Song' is good ordinary rhyme, and in both substance and form reminds us a little of the first series of the *Biglow Papers*, though it is dated earlier. His prose, so far as preserved, consists of story-sketches, which hold the reader's interest but are in no way remarkable. Among other things he wrote at this time a temperance tract, *Franklin Evans*.

In 1849 he broke away from all regular employment, and started off on a leisurely and apparently purposeless excursion, which was to be of great importance in forming the character of his later work. He calls it 'a leisurely journey and working expedition.' It must be described in his own words of brief summary. He went, he says, with his brother Jeff, 'through all the Middle States, and down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Lived awhile in New Orleans, and work'd there on the editorial staff of "daily Crescent" news-

paper. After a time plodded back northward, up the Mississippi, and around to and by way of the Great Lakes, Michigan, Huron, and Erie, to Niagara falls and lower Canada, finally returning through central New York and down the Hudson; traveling altogether probably 8,000 miles this trip, to and fro.' From what we know of his life in New York and Brooklyn, we can infer what this expedition was to him. Speaking of the origin of *Leaves of Grass*, he once said, 'Remember, the book arose out of my life in Brooklyn and New York from 1838 to 1853, absorbing a million people, for fifteen years, with an intimacy, an eagerness, an abandon, probably never equalled.' With the same passion he must have absorbed the sights and the life of the country he passed through — almost the whole of the United States at that time — on this 8,000 mile excursion, making his own way, working here and there at his trade, living the life of the people. There are vivid reminiscences of the South constantly recurring in his later writing, as in the poem of the live-oak; and there is everywhere present the feeling of bigness, freedom, and heartiness, of the life of the West.

On his return, he took up for a little while his former occupations, editing and printing a daily and weekly paper, the *Freeman*, and engaging, with his father, as he had done before going away, in the business of building and selling houses in Brooklyn. But he had now conceived the work which he was to do, to chant the songs of democracy as he understood it, to 'Compose a march for these States.' According to his first biographer, Dr. Bucke, he experienced a sort of conversion, and, like other mystics, felt his life-work given him as a mission. At any rate, he lost interest in other occupations, except so far as was necessary for simple self-support, gave up the successful house-building business, and devoted himself to the composition of his *Leaves of Grass*. This was issued without any publisher, the typesetting and printing having been done partly by Whitman himself, in 1855.

Apparently the last specimen we possess of Whitman's earlier style is the poem 'Sailing the Mississippi at Midnight,' probably written in 1849, and given, as by a rather pleasant irony are all the specimens which we have of his regular verse, in the *Prose Works*. I quote from what seems to be its original form, in the *Notes and Fragments*:—

How solemn! sweeping this dense black tide!  
No friendly lights! the heaven o'er us;  
A murky darkness on either side,  
And kindred darkness all before us!

Now, drawn nearer the shelving rim,  
Weird-like shadows suddenly rise;  
Shapes of mist and phantoms dim  
Baffle the gazer's straining eyes.

Then, by the trick of our own swift motion,  
Straight, tall giants, an army vast,  
Rank by rank, like the waves of ocean,  
On the shore march stilly past.

How solemn! the river a trailing pall,  
Which takes, but never again gives back;  
And moonless and starless the heaven's arch'd wall,  
Responding an equal black!

O, tireless waters! like Life's quick dream,  
Onward and onward ever hurrying —  
Like death in this midnight hour you seem,  
Life in your chill drops greedily burying!

Unlike time you begin and end,  
Unlike life you 've a pathway steady,  
Unlike earth's are your numberless graves  
Ever undug, yet ever ready.

The change from this style to that of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* is so great that it seems as though some connecting links must be found in his newspaper writing of the time. Yet this is doubtful. The first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, he says, was printed 'after many MS. doings and undoings,' and possibly all the transition stages were lost in

this repeated revision. The section of 'First Drafts and Rejected Lines and Passages' given in the *Notes and Fragments* does not show this transition, but is entirely in the style of *Leaves of Grass* itself. All that we know of the development of Whitman's peculiar style is what he tells us in one brief sentence: 'I had great trouble in leaving out the stock "poetical" touches, but succeeded at last.'

The first edition of *Leaves of Grass* had practically no sale. Some copies were sent out for review, which received little attention, and some were given away. Only one copy, so far as we know, won a real response, and that was the one sent to Emerson. His letter to Whitman must be quoted in full: —

'I am not blind to the worth of the wonderful gift of "Leaves of Grass." I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. I am very happy in reading it, as great power makes us happy. It meets the demand I am always making of what seems the sterile and stingy Nature, as if too much handiwork or too much lymph in the temperament were making our western wits fat and mean. I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things said incomparably well, as they must be. I find the courage of treatment which so delights us, and which large perception only can inspire.

'I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground somewhere for such a start. I rubbed my eyes a little to see if this sunbeam were no illusion; but the solid sense of the book is a sober certainty. It has the best merits, namely of fortifying and encouraging.

'I did not know until I, last night, saw the book advertised in a newspaper, that I could trust the name as real and available for a post-office. I wish to see my benefactor, and have felt much like striking my tasks and visiting New York to pay you my respects.'

Whitman published this letter, together with his own long reply to it, in the second edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which appeared in 1856. On the back of this edition was printed, over Emerson's name, 'I greet you at the beginning of a great career.' All this was at least in somewhat doubtful taste, but Emerson was above resenting it or retracting anything he had said, though naturally in a private letter, acknowledging the gift of a book from its author, he perhaps expressed himself somewhat otherwise than he would have done in writing for public print. In 1856 he wrote to Carlyle, 'One book last summer came out in New York, a non-descript monster which yet had terrible eyes and buffalo strength, and was indisputably American.' (See the whole letter in the *Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence*, volume ii, page 283.) He visited Whitman in New York, as he had spoken of doing, and friendly relations were kept up between the two till the end of Emerson's life. In 1856 Thoreau also visited Whitman, and wrote of him soon after: 'That Walt Whitman . . . is the most interesting fact to me at present. I have just read his second edition (which he gave me), and it has done me more good than any reading for a long time. . . . There are two or three pieces in the book which are disagreeable, to say the least; simply sensual. . . . On the whole it sounds to me very brave and American, after whatever deductions. I do not believe that all the sermons, so called, that have been preached in this land, put together, are equal to it for preaching. We ought to rejoice greatly in him. . . . Though rude and sometimes ineffectual, it is a great primitive poem, an alarum or trumpet-note ringing through the American camp. . . . Since I have seen him, I find that I am not disturbed by any brag or egotism in his book. He may turn out the least of a braggart of all, having a better right to be confident. He is a great fellow.'

The personal impression Whitman made upon all who ever saw him seems to have been such as to counteract any previous notions they may have had of his work as being either 'egotistic' or 'sensual.' Howells, not a judge prejudiced in his favor, met him in New York in 1860, and speaks of 'the spiritual purity which I felt in him, no less than the dignity.' Howells had previously conceived him as 'the apostle of the rough, the uncouth.' Now he found him to be 'the gentlest person; his barbaric yawp, translated into terms of social encounter, was an address of singular quiet, delivered in a voice of winning and endearing friendliness.'



There are in Whitman's work passages which, though Thoreau's word 'sensual' is by no means the right one to describe them, are anything but fit reading for young ladies' seminaries. Such passages he has in common with nearly all the greatest writers. But naturally at their first appearance they aroused bitter opposition to him, and from time to time this opposition took serious practical form. When the third edition of *Leaves of Grass* was being printed at Boston in 1860, Emerson tried to persuade Whitman to omit these parts of his work. Whitman owns that 'each point of Emerson's statement was unanswerable,' but his own 'unmistakable conviction' that he must leave his work complete, as he understood completeness, was unshaken.

The 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass* contained more than twice as many poems as the edition of 1855. The edition of 1860 was still further augmented, especially by the important collection of poems on men's friendship entitled *Calamus*. Neither of these editions, however, had much sale, and the firm which published the Boston edition failed at the beginning of the war.

Whitman's younger brother, George, enlisted in the Union army, and served throughout the war, rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He was in most of the important battles in Virginia. In 1862 he was wounded at the first battle of Fredericksburg. The wound was thought to be serious (though it did not prove so), and Whitman at an hour's notice started for the army. He spent a considerable part of that winter with the Army of the Potomac, and began the attendance on wounded soldiers which he did not give up until the last hospitals at Washington were closed.

These were the central years of Whitman's life. He gave them almost wholly to his work for the soldiers, living as simply and cheaply as he could, and working in the hospitals almost daily till the end of the war. He assisted constantly in dressing the soldiers' wounds, but he did far more by ministering to their wants in many other ways, and most of all by the health and strength and courage of his own personality. 'A surgeon who throughout the war had charge of one of the largest army hospitals in Washington,' says Dr. Bucke, in his *Life of Whitman*, 'has told the present writer that (without personal acquaintance or any other than professional interest), he watched for many months Walt Whitman's ministrings to the sick and wounded, and was satisfied that he saved many lives.' There are few records, even in those years, of such simple and unselfish devotion as can be found in Whitman's *Specimen Days*, and in his unpremeditated letters, which have now been collected under the title *The Wound-Dresser*. At least one passage must be quoted from an eye-witness, Mr. John Swinton, telling of his hospital visits: 'I first heard of him among the sufferers on the Peninsula after a battle there. Subsequently I saw him, time and again, in the Washington hospitals, or wending his way there with basket or haversack on his arm, and the strength of beneficence suffusing his face. His devotion surpassed the devotion of woman. It would take a volume to tell of his kindness, tenderness, and thoughtfulness.

'Never shall I forget one night when I accompanied him on his rounds through a hospital, filled with those wounded young Americans whose heroism he has sung in deathless numbers. There were three rows of cots, and each cot bore its man. When he appeared, in passing along, there was a smile of affection and welcome on every face, however wan, and his presence seemed to light up the place as it might be lit by the presence of the Son of Love. From cot to cot they called him, often in tremulous tones or in whispers; they embraced him, they touched his hand, they gazed at him. To one he gave a few words of cheer, for another he wrote a letter home, to others he gave an orange, a few comfits, a cigar, a pipe and tobacco, a sheet of paper or a postage stamp, all of which and many other things were in his capacious haversack. From another he would receive a dying message for mother, wife, or sweetheart; for another he would promise to go on an errand; to another, some special friend, very low, he would give a manly farewell kiss. He did the things for them which no nurse or doctor could do, and he seemed to leave a benediction at every cot as he passed along. The lights had gleamed for hours in the hospital that night before he left it, and as he took his way towards the door, you could hear the voice of many a stricken hero calling, "Walt, Walt, Walt, come again! come again!"'

*Drum Taps*, Whitman's poems of the war, was published in 1865, and the *Sequel to Drum Taps*, containing his memorial poems on Lincoln, and a few more war poems, later in the year. It is surprising that these attracted so little attention as they did. Yet we must remember that it has always taken at least a generation for the general public to accept any original form of rhythmic expression, especially a form so different from accepted standards, and apparently so uncouth, as Whitman's. Of the substance of the poems, their vividness and truth, it is unnecessary to speak here. But it may be noted in passing, that, while there is more of the war in his work than in that of any other poet, there is nowhere any touch of bitterness or even of hostility.

Toward the end of the war Whitman obtained a position as clerk in the Department of the Interior. Not long afterward the Secretary of the Interior, James Harlan, came across Whitman's copy of *Leaves of Grass* (the 1860 edition) which he was revising for republication, and at once discharged Whitman as 'the author of an indecent book.' Whitman soon obtained an equally good position in the office of the Attorney-General, but the incident called out a famous defence of Whitman and arraignment of Harlan, in W. D. O'Connor's pamphlet *The Good Gray Poet*. This defence and arraignment are so exaggerated in tone that they have probably done Whitman's reputation more harm than good, and have made people feel that anything written by a disciple of his must be taken with very large allowances. Yet the pamphlet is admirable at least for its intense loyalty, and for its title, which was a creation of genius. Whitman has been called ever since, and deservedly, 'The Good Gray Poet.'

The new and revised edition (the fourth) of *Leaves of Grass*, with *Drum Taps* added, was published in 1867. In 1871 was published the fifth edition, with 'Passage to India' and other important additions. In 1872 Whitman was asked to give the Commencement poem at Dartmouth College, and he delivered 'As a strong bird on pinions free' (now 'Thou mother with thy equal brood'). In 'Passage to India' and in the later poems that group themselves with it, we have Whitman's work under a somewhat new aspect. From the beginning he had said, 'I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,' and had insisted always on the unity of the two and on their equal claims. But both by temperament and by fixed intention he had expressed primarily the material side of things and of man (as he said, the side most neglected by other poets), glorying in the triumphs of modern industrialism and in the joys of physical health. Now (see the passages quoted in notes on pages 546 and 590, and the whole of his own note on 'Passage to India' in the *Complete Prose Works*, pages 272-274, as well as the poem itself and those that follow), he insists most on the other aspect of the dual unity, on the spirit that 'laughs at what you call dissolution,' and knows it has the best of time and space. The changes which he made in the brief poem 'Assurances' (page 553) from one edition to another, until it found its final form as given in the 1871 edition with 'Passage to India,' are typical of this development.

Whitman was one of the healthiest of men. Those who have described his work in the hospitals say that health and strength seemed to radiate from his presence. All his life he had lived a great deal in the open air, and in the hospital years he depended on his long walks about Washington as his chief delight and relief. But by 1864 his health began to be broken down. He had the first illness of his life, called at first 'hospital malaria,' in the hot summer of that year. Dr. Platt, in his life of Whitman, says also that through a scratch in his hand he was infected with septic poisoning from a wound he was helping to dress. This seemed to have only a temporary effect, but he was never entirely well afterward. In January, 1873, he had a paralytic stroke, which for a while disabled his left side completely. After a time he recovered somewhat, but could never move freely. For the first two years he suffered severely, and he was an invalid for the nineteen years that followed. His work at Washington was of course ended, and he had no source of income but his books, which hardly brought him anything.

During these years he lived at Camden, N. J., the home of George Whitman. Almost in poverty, until 1881, when the sale of his works began to bring him a small income, — which enabled him to live with some slight degree of comfort in a home of his own, —



and in constant weakness and much of the time helplessness, he underwent a test such as few men have been subjected to, and one which was particularly severe for him, the lover of all physical joys and especially of free movement in the open air. He met this test with complete triumph. All who saw him at Camden — and his home became to some degree a goal of pilgrimage, especially in the last ten years of his life — bear witness to the sweetness and strength of the character that revealed itself in him.

The so-called 'Centennial Edition' of *Leaves of Grass* was issued in 1876, with a second volume, composed partly of prose and partly of verse. By 1879 Whitman had partially recovered from his paralysis, and was able to take a journey through the Western States in that year, and in the following year to Canada. In 1881 the seventh edition of *Leaves of Grass* was published by James R. Osgood & Co. of Boston, but six months after its publication, when some two thousand copies had been sold, the firm was threatened with prosecution by the Massachusetts District Attorney, and declined to continue the sale of the book. It was immediately after published at Philadelphia. In 1888 was added the collection called *November Boughs*, in 1891 were published *Good-bye My Fancy* and the tenth edition of *Leaves of Grass*, including these last two additions. Whitman's health had been steadily declining again since 1885; he suffered a second shock of paralysis in 1888, but lived on, still cheerful and mentally active, and happy in a few devoted friends, until 1892, when he died, March 26. The small collection, *Old Age Echoes*, was added to his *Leaves of Grass* in the 1897 edition, *Calamus* (letters to his friend Peter Doyle) was published in 1897, *The Wound Dresser* in 1898, *An American Primer* and the *Diary in Canada* in 1904.

The question whether Walt Whitman's work is properly to be called poetry at all or not still exists only in a few academic circles. It has always been largely a question of academic definitions. And while we must have some definiteness of conception, in order that our ideas may not become entirely vague and our words meaningless, it would be well in this case to imitate Whitman's own modesty when he says: 'Let me not dare, here or anywhere, for my own purposes, or any purposes, to attempt the definition of Poetry, nor answer the question what it is. Like Religion, Love, Nature, while those terms are indispensable, and we all give a sufficiently accurate meaning to them, in my opinion no definition that has ever been made sufficiently encloses the name Poetry.' It may be added that one of the chief functions of any strongly original poet — or thinker — is to compel us to enlarge our definitions.

But even without departing greatly from the traditional conceptions of poetry, and certainly without abandoning the idea that material for poetry, however noble or beautiful, does not truly become poetry until it has been put into rhythmic form, we are now beginning frankly to accept Whitman's work as poetry. We no longer need the excellent authority of John Addington Symonds, a critic competent above most others and especially devoted to beauty of form in verse, to tell us that Whitman's verse is wonderfully rhythmical, and that his rhythms are truly and often delicately fitted to what he has to express. It is only needful really to read Whitman, a thing which is often at first difficult to do and which people in general have not even yet learned to do — to read him in the mass — and above all to read him aloud, which is the final test of poetry — in order to feel the strength and fitness of his rhythms, and to realize that they are not the rhythms of prose, nor of that bastard form called poetic prose, but are distinctly metrical rhythms, that is, the rhythms of verse. For the most part, they hold among verse-rhythms somewhat the same place as the recitative and the chant (names which he often gives to his poems) hold in music. He has also, when he chooses, the lyric note. The distinction between his recitative and his lyric, when he uses them together, as in 'Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,' or 'When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,' is just the same and just as clearly marked as that between regular lyrics and regular blank verse.

It has taken people so long, however, to settle for themselves, consciously or unconsciously, this preliminary question of whether Whitman's work was poetry at all or not, that they have only just begun to appreciate his power and to give him his true rank.

Professor Trent, in his recent *History of American Literature* (1903), calls him 'too large a man and poet for adequate comprehension at present.' Moreover, Americans have been somewhat alienated from Whitman by the attitude of the best foreign critics, who have found in him the one and only poet truly characteristic of America. Not really having taken the trouble to know Whitman, but having conceived of him and his work as something rough, rowdyish, uncultured and altogether materialistic and sensual, Americans were naturally offended that he, rather than men like Longfellow, Lowell, and Emerson, should be taken as typical of America. We felt that all the chief American poets (except Poe, the only one whose work could have been written elsewhere than in America) were typical; and that the breadth of culture in such men as Longfellow and Lowell made them only the more completely typical. We naturally sought in the typical American poet an expression of our whole life and character, including (as Whitman himself has said somewhere) our inheritance of all the best from past ages and foreign lands; while the foreign critic, as naturally, sought in him the expression of only that part of our life which is entirely new and strange — and if uncouth and rude, so much the better. We have now come to know Whitman more truly; to know that he was anything but the rowdy and materialist of our first conceptions; to know that while he did not lack culture in the narrower sense (having read and thoroughly digested Emerson, having understood Carlyle and in his own thought refuted and gone beyond him, having won some genuine knowledge of Fichte's thought and Hegel's, if not directly of Plato's, and having nourished himself on the few greatest writers, Shakespeare, the Bible, and Homer — even though in translation, some genuine knowledge of which is better than our usual pretence at knowledge of the original) he also had that broader and better first-hand culture which comes from true human relations with many living men and women, forming out of them a character which stood some of the hardest tests of life. We have also become more ready to admit that those material aspects of our life which primarily, though by no means exclusively, he tried to express, are in their crudeness and power truly characteristic of America. And now, knowing him better, we see that he has expressed not only some material aspects, but also some essential ideals of America, as no other poet has: among them, our sense of freedom and independence (his work is the logical outcome of Emerson's address on 'The American Scholar'), our conception of real democratic equality, our intense individualism yet sense of union one with another in a great whole.

### SIDNEY LANIER

SIDNEY LANIER was born at Macon, Ga., February 3, 1842. He came of a family of musicians, the earliest known ancestor having been attached to the court of Queen Elizabeth, and his son and grandson having been directors of music under Charles I and Charles II. The grandson was one of the incorporators and the first Marshal of the Society of Musicians under Charles II, and there were four others of the name of Lanier among the incorporators. Thomas Lanier came to America in 1716, and settled in Virginia. Lanier's father was a lawyer, living at Macon, Ga., and his mother was a Virginian of Scotch descent, of a family distinguished in politics and also skilled in music.

Sidney Lanier had from his childhood a strong ambition, and we may even say genius, for music. As a boy he seemed able to learn any instrument without instruction, and could play the flute, violin, organ, piano, and guitar before he could fairly read. His greatest passion was for the violin, but his father persuaded him to abandon it. His sensitive nature was hardly able to bear the exaltation produced in him by its notes. In deference to his father's wishes, he devoted himself chiefly to the flute.

When he was fourteen years old, he entered Oglethorpe College (or 'University,' as it called itself), in the sophomore class. After losing a year by outside work, he graduated at the age of eighteen, sharing the highest honors for scholarship with one of his classmates, and was immediately appointed tutor in the college. This was in 1860. In 1861 he gave up his position to volunteer as a private in the Confederate army. He was in the battles of

Seven Pines, Malvern Hill, and others. The following year his younger brother, Clifford, joined him, and both served as privates (though promotion was offered to each at different times, and to Sidney Lanier three times), in order not to be separated from each other. They were transferred to the Signal Service in 1862, and in 1863 their company was mounted and served in Virginia and North Carolina. Finally they were appointed signal officers on blockade-runners, and thus necessarily separated. Sidney Lanier was captured, with his vessel, and imprisoned for five months at Point Lookout. In February, 1865, he was released, and returned home to Georgia on foot, with his flute, from which he had never been separated. His strength was seriously impaired, and though he recovered from a dangerous illness of six weeks, the beginning of consumption, from which his mother had just died, was already upon him. The rest of his life was a struggle against the disease.

He was still only twenty-three years old, and had not found his vocation in life, though strong musical and literary ambitions were already awake in him. But he was led to think that music was not a serious career, not worth devoting his life to. While working as clerk in a hotel, he took up and completed in three weeks of April, 1867, his novel, *Tiger Lilies* (begun at Burwell's Bay in 1863, and continued in 1865), and in May took the story to New York to be published. It is a picture of the war, hastily drawn, and of course somewhat crude. It expresses strongly, however, the horror of war which had constantly grown in him during the progress of that struggle which he would not abandon until it was ended. He describes war as 'that strange, terrible flower of which the most wonderful specimen yet produced was grown by two wealthy planters of North America.' 'It is supposed by some,' he goes on (the passage is quoted in Dr. Ward's *Memorial*), 'that the seed of this American specimen (now dead) yet remains in the land; but as for this author (who, with many friends, suffered from the unhealthy odors of the plant), he could find it in his heart to wish fervently that this seed, if there be verily any, might perish in the germ, utterly out of sight and life and memory, and out of the remote hope of resurrection, forever and ever, no matter in whose granary they are cherished!' The novel was published, but had little success. He returned to the South, and taught school for a year. In 1867 he was married to Miss Mary Day, of Macon. For five years following, he studied and practised law with his father.

During this time he had written but little in verse, yet some of that little was of exquisite quality. The first poems we have are those of 1865, 'The Dying Words of Stonewall Jackson' and 'The Tournament,' the second of which he used with some alterations in his 'Psalm of the West,' eleven years later. The lyric 'Night and Day' belongs to 1866, and in 1868 the 'Jacquerie' was planned and partly written. In 1868 he wrote also a lyric, 'Life and Song,' the last two lines of which have been often quoted in speaking of his life and of the poetry which was as yet hardly begun:—

His song was only living aloud,  
His work, a singing with his hand.

There was little written in the following years, until 1874, except three dialect poems of Georgia life.

He could not remain devoted to the law, however. He felt more and more that his life was to be brief, and that he must do something in art, which is lasting.

'Were it not for some considerations which make such a proposition seem absurd in the highest degree,' he wrote to his wife early in 1873, 'I would think that I am shortly to die, and that my spirit hath been singing its swan-song before dissolution. All day my soul hath been cutting swiftly into the great space of the subtle, unspeakable deep, driven by wind after wind of heavenly melody.' He determined to devote himself for what was left of his life to music and literature. He tried New York, but finally settled in Baltimore, in December of this year, 1873, having obtained an engagement there as first flute in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra. He wrote to his father, who had protested against his purpose as unwise: 'My dear father, think how, for twenty years, through poverty, through pain, through weariness, through sickness, through the uncongenial

atmosphere of a farcical college and of a bare army and then of an exacting business life, through all the discouragement of being wholly unacquainted with literary people and literary ways, — I say, think how, in spite of all these depressing circumstances, and of a thousand more which I could enumerate, these two figures of music and of poetry have steadily kept in my heart so that I could not banish them. Does it not seem to you as to me, that I begin to have the right to enroll myself among the devotees of these two sublime arts, after having followed them so long and so humbly, and through so much bitterness? His father felt the force of this appeal, and generously helped Lanier, so far as he could, to carry out his ambitions.

At Baltimore he found what he had craved for, the opportunity to hear good music, and access to extensive libraries. In the comparative freedom and exhilaration of this new life were written the first poems really characteristic of his mature work, among them the beautiful tributes to Mrs. Lanier, 'My Springs,' 'In Absence,' 'Acknowledgment,' and 'Laus Mariae.' It was in the summer of 1874, in August, that he wrote his first poem which attracted attention, 'Corn.' This poem opens with stanzas almost as beautiful as anything in Lanier's work, describing the full richness of summer in the South. As a whole, however, it is not entirely successful. The symphonic structure is not sustained to the end, and much of the last part of the poem is given to a description of the effect on Southern farmers of cotton speculation, and especially of borrowing money at ruinous rates to plant cotton instead of corn. That subject was quite in place in Lanier's dialect poems, 'Jones's Private Argymment,' and 'Thar's more in the man than thar is in the land,' but here, in a poem of the quality of 'Corn,' it jars, and in both substance and expression is quite out of harmony with the rest of the poem. 'Corn,' though it is interesting historically as having won for Lanier his first recognition when it appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine* for February, 1875, and also for its attempt to express fitly in poetry the beauty of waving fields of our chief American grain, must, in final critical judgment, be accounted a failure. This is the less to be regretted because Lanier immediately after succeeded, with 'The Symphony,' in the chief things which he had failed to do in 'Corn.' In 'The Symphony,' published only four months later in the same magazine, he created a poem of real harmonic and symphonic structure throughout, and of far greater musical beauty than he had even attempted in 'Corn;' and he achieved the amazing *tour de force* of making real poetry out of the money question. A little later, in a brief lyric, 'The Waving of the Corn,' he expresses the full beauty of the cornfield.

'The Symphony' won him the friendship of Bayard Taylor, — a friendship which grew as the two men came to know each other better, and which is recorded in the letters that passed between them. His letters to another firm friend, Mr. Gibson Peacock, are also preserved, and are of great interest. He was devoted to a serious study of his two arts, and especially of the relations between them. Often he was compelled to interrupt his work either to go in search of health to Florida or Pennsylvania or the mountains of North Carolina, or to do hack writing for a mere living. But he persisted, with help and encouragement from his father and brother, from his friends, and most of all from his wife. To her he wrote: "Que mon nom soit flétri, que la France soit libre!" quoth Danton; which is to say, interpreted by my environment: Let my name perish — the poetry is good poetry and the music is good music, and beauty dieth not, and the heart that needs it will find it.' He was chosen in 1876, at the instance of Bayard Taylor, to write the words of the Centennial Cantata, for which the music was composed by Dudley Buck. In this year he wrote also the beautiful 'Evening Song,' possibly his finest lyric; the poem 'Clover,' which ranks between 'Corn' and 'The Symphony,' and has something of the qualities of both; 'The Waving of the Corn,' just spoken of; and our finest Centennial poem (not forgetting Lowell's and Whitman's), the 'Psalm of the West.'

Meanwhile he was lecturing for schools and for private classes, writing descriptive articles in prose for *Lippincott's Magazine*, making a book on Florida for a railroad company (published by the Lippincotts in 1876), and cheerfully doing whatever he could to earn himself a living and win some leisure for original writing. In 1877 was published the

first collection of his *Poems*, and this year was the one most productive of new pieces, though of brief ones. Such a condensed bit of lyric as 'The Stirrup-Cup,' however, is worth many a long poem. To this year belong also the 'Song of the Chattahoochee' (one of his most popular lyrics, though perhaps not ultimately to be counted among the few of his very best), two of his best brief nature poems, 'Tampa Robins' and 'From the Flats' (the last is bound to haunt forever all true lovers of the hills), 'The Mocking-Bird,' 'The Bee,' 'Florida Sunday,' and the poems 'To Wagner' and 'To Beethoven.'

His two best ballads, 'The Revenge of Hamish' and 'How Love looked for Hell,' belong to 1878-79. The first seems to me unsurpassed in narrative technique. Objectivity can no farther go. It is a masterpiece of absolute detachment, yet of wonderful vividness. The second is also remarkable for the way in which it clothes abstractions with life, and makes vivid the vague idea that where Love comes, there Hell cannot be. These, each unique in its kind, and, belonging to the same year, his chief masterpiece in still another kind which is peculiarly his own, being a new creation, — 'The Marshes of Glynn,' — show the many possibilities of that talent which was not to reach its full development.

Bayard Taylor died in December, 1878, and Lanier wrote the poem 'To Bayard Taylor,' with its beautiful picture of the Elysium of the poets, its touches of Elizabethan phrasing, and, toward the end, its strong, condensed expression of the hard conditions and the struggle which were bearing heavily upon Lanier himself, but from which he was soon to escape into that open sun-lit land of the last two stanzas.

He had work still to do, however. Early in 1879 he was appointed Lecturer on English Literature in the Johns Hopkins University. This brought him the happy certainty of a fixed though small income. For his courses of 1879-80 and 1880-81 he prepared the lectures which, in revised form, now constitute his two most important prose volumes, *The Science of English Verse* and *The English Novel and its Development*. He made an engagement with the Scribners to complete a series of books for boys, of which four were published, two after his death: *The Boy's Froissart* (1878), *The Boy's King Arthur* (1880), *The Boy's Mabinogion* (1881), and *The Boy's Percy* (1882). In the winter of 1880-81 he was barely able to get through with twelve lectures at the University. The poem 'Sunrise' was written with a fever temperature of 104, when, says Mrs. Lanier, 'the hand which first pencilled its lines had not strength to carry nourishment to the lips.' A last attempt to prolong his life was made by trying tent life in the mountains of North Carolina, but it was unsuccessful, and he died September 7, 1881.

Though younger by almost a generation than our chief elder poets, Lanier seems to be taking his rank almost without question among them. He did not complete his work. To his poet friend, Paul H. Hayne, he wrote: 'How I long to sing a thousand songs that oppress me, unsung, — is inexpressible. Yet the mere work that brings bread gives me no time.' When he died, his talent was growing. Unlike Poe, if he had lived he would probably have given us greater poems than he did. It is therefore hard to say what would have proved really characteristic of him had he completed any large mass of work. As it is, he has given us some beautiful and haunting lyrics, sometimes with touches of strange fancies like those in 'Night and Day' and the 'Ballad of Trees and the Master'; he has written two of our finest ballads, both unique in kind; in the 'Psalm of the West' he has written a poem of America that for range and beauty and historical completeness, and for the sweep of the whole from its superb opening up to just near the close, where it fails a little, deserves to stand beside or even above Lowell's 'Commemoration Ode' and Whitman's 'Thou mother with thy equal brood.' And finally, there is one thing which, even in the small amount of his work, we may call distinctively characteristic, — the way of writing found in two poems so different in substance as 'The Symphony' and 'The Marshes of Glynn.' 'Whatever turn I have for art,' he wrote to Paul H. Hayne, 'is purely musical, poetry being with me a mere tangent into which I shoot sometimes. . . . The very deepest of my life has been filled with music, which I have studied and cultivated far more than poetry.' Something of this music-passion has woven itself into his poetry. His theory that English verse has for its essential basis not accent, but strict



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musical quantity, is almost certainly a mistaken one. But the book he wrote to prove this mistaken theory is by far the most suggestive and inspiring that has ever dealt with the technique of verse. And in his own work he has written poetry more rich in music than we had before. He has learned all that there was to be learned from his predecessors, among them Swinburne, and then he has found for himself new melodies, and has taught something of them to the poets of a younger generation, — notably Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey.





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